A DISCOURSE

Concerning the Pretended

Religious Assembling

In *PRIVATE*

CONVENTICLES

WHEREIN

The Unlawfulness and Unreasonableness of it is fully Evinced by several Arguments.

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DISCOURSE

Religious Admonishing

CONVERTITES

The Duties and Unreasonableness of Family Evangelical Ignorants.

PUBLISHER
To The
READER.

THough there be no great need of a Preface to the following Papers, yet partly to comply with custome, and partly out of a Reverential respect to the dear memory of the Authour, my deceased Father, I thought it convenient to premise something by way of Apology to the Reader.

And that he may not be disappointed in his after Entertainment, 'twill be requisite for him in the entrance to understand, that he is not here to expect a Discourse recommended [illegible] by strokes of Oratory,

neat turns of expression, and harmonious Cadencies, this being no way πράγμασιν ἀνάλογον *(as* Aristotle *says in his Rhetorick) agreeable to the nature of the thing, which being a* determination *of a* Question, *calls for no other Ornaments than plainness, perspicuity and solidity.*

And as such a Rhetorical mode of Writing suits not with the nature *of the* work, *so neither with the* design *of its* Composition. *For this Treatise was principally intended by the Authour, for the instruction of ordinary and unlearned persons, and particularly those of his own Congregation, and accordingly he made it his business, to bring it to the* level *of their Capacities,*

Of what advantage this work may

may be to the learned *World, it becomes not me to preſage, onely thus much I believe I may ſay, that the Cauſe has not ſuffered under his hands, and that as Peace and Unity was his* aim, *ſo Truth and Victory is his* attainment. *And this is all the Apology I think needfull to make in behalf of the Authour.*

Now, as to what concerns my Publication *of this* Poſthumous *Treatiſe, I am aware but of one objection that may be made againſt it, which is, that the World is well ſtockt with excellent diſcourſes on this Subject already. This I acknowledge to be* true, *but no way available to the purpoſe for which it is alledged. For firſt, may not the ſame be ſaid of almoſt all the Arguments that are?*

And yet this is not thought ſuffi-cient to barr all after-undertakings. And beſides, there are different ways of managing the ſame Subject, and how ſtale ſoever the latter be, yet the former may be always new. According to that of Seneca, Etſi omnia a veteribus inventa eſſent; hoc tamen ſemper novum erit, uſus & inventorum ab aliis ſcientia & diſpoſitio. *Beſides, there is as much (if not more) in the advantageous propoſal of an Argument, as in the Argument it ſelf, and it often happens, that by the mere placing a thing in a new light conviction is wrought, when the very ſame conſideration in another poſture proved unſuccesfull.*

Theſe Conſiderations, together with the proſpect of being benefi-

cial

cial to the publick, prevailed with me to concern my ſelf in this Publication, and are (I hope) ſufficient to juſtifie the undertaking to others. For ſure that perſon would betray a very narrow and ſelfiſh ſpirit, who declines an opportunity of doing good with the fruits of another's *labour, as his charity to the Poor muſt needs be very cold, that refuſes to be the* Steward of another's Bounty. *Farewell.*

John Norris.

Allſouls *College*
June *the* 1*ſt.*
1684

A Seaſonable Queſtion fully diſcuſſed. *Viz.*

Whether in a conſtituted Church, where there is a conſtant preaching Miniſtry eſtabliſhed by Law, if a Silenced Non-conformiſt Miniſter, ſhall come in to reſide or inhabit, or otherwiſe intrude himſelf into any Town or Pariſh, and there (without leave and againſt the will of the Magiſtrate) ſet up a courſe of Preaching or other Miniſterial acts in Private Meetings (commonly called Conventicles) it may be accounted the Ordinance of God, or means to beget and encreaſe Faith, or any other Saving Grace, in the hearts of ſuch as ſhall go to hear him.

IN the Entrance of my diſcourſe upon this ſubject, I ſhall not ſpend time in explaining the terms of the queſtion; they are ſo eaſie and obvious to every underſtanding, that they need it not. Without therefore any farther Proeme, the negative (with ſubmiſſion to better judgments) I ſhall defend: And that it is not the Ordinance of God as a means of grace, conducing ought to the Salvation of mens ſouls, I hope, and will endeavour to make appear to any ſober and conſiderate Chriſtian, upon theſe Eight following grounds.

ARGUMENT. I.

THat cannot be the Ordinance of God, or means of grace, that is, *ipso facto*, a ſinfull act. For God, whoſe words and ways are all of them *holy, juſt and good*, hath appointed, ordained, or allowed nothing that hath any thing of ſin in it: And it were no leſs than blaſphemy to ſay the contrary. God doth not warrant any man to doe evil, that good may come by it, no not the leaſt evil, for the procurement of the greateſt good, either to our own, or the ſouls of others. The Apoſtle rejects the very thought of ſuch a thing, with horror and deteſtation, as knowing * *damnation* to be the juſt reward of it. It is a good ſaying of *Cajetan* upon that place; *Secundum ſanam veramque doctrinam, peccata non ſunt eligenda, ut media ad quemcunque bonum finem*; According to ſound and true doctrine, ſins are not to be choſen as means to procure any good end whatſoever. And mark his reaſon; *Quia ſuapte naturâ repugnat peccato, quod ſit eligibile*; It is contrary to, and diſagreeable with the nature

* Rom. 3. 8.

nature of ſin, to be at all matter of our choice; *Propterea nec propter ſe, nec propter aliud bonum, eſt eligibile*; And therefore it is not to be choſen, either for it ſelf, or for any good that comes by it. They are neither good intents, nor good events, that make good actions. All Ἐθελοθρησκία Will-worſhip is abominable to God. His expreſs Precept is, * *Ye ſhall diligently keep the Commandments of the Lord your God, his teſtimonies and ſtatutes, and doe that which is right and good in the ſight of the Lord.* And his Prohibition, † *Ye ſhall not doe every man what is right in his own eyes.* The Commandments of God would ſoon be made of none effect, if every one in the Church ſhould doe what beſt likes him. Shall the Maſter's will depend on the pleaſure of the Servant, or the Servant's upon the Maſter's? He cannot be approved by him that employs him, who buſies himſelf in a work moſt ſutable to his own humour, with neglect of what is given him in Command. Had a good intention been enough to have juſtified an action, *Saul* had done very well in ſparing *Agag*, and the beſt of the ſpoils of

* Deut. 6. 17, 18.

† Deut. 12. 8.

the *Amalekites*; and the kingdom of *Iſrael* might have continued to him and his houſe. And Saint *Peter* had never
* Mat. 16. 23. been call'd * *Satan*, by our Saviour, as *not ſavouring the things of God, but of men*, for diſſuading his Maſter from going up to *Jeruſalem*. The means, as well as the intention, muſt be good, if we would have our actions pleaſing to God. We grant God may, and doth often, bring good out of evil; but that is no thanks to thoſe that doe it. Evil can naturally produce nothing but evil: It muſt be no leſs than the infinite Wiſdom and Almighty power of God, that
† Εἰκὼν Βασ. p. 105. muſt over-rule it into good. † *As good Ends cannot juſtifie Evil means, ſo neither will evil beginnings ever bring forth good concluſions, unleſs God by a miracle of mercy create light out of darkneſs, order out of confuſion, and peace out of our paſſions.* And as he hath not allowed us to doe any evil, for the obtaining or procuring of the greateſt
‖ Job 13. 7. good, ſo he needs it not. ‖ *Wilt thou ſpeak wickedly for God, and talk deceitfully for him? q. d.* his cauſe, his glory, needs not any ſin of ours to promote it. He will never thank any man for ſeeking

ſeeking his honour by ſinfull means; he can get himſelf glory, and ſave mens ſouls otherwiſe. He will ſay as *Achiſh*, * *Have I need of mad-men, that ye have brought this fellow to play the mad-man in my preſence?* The way God hath taught us to glorifie him by, in ſeeking or procuring the ſalvation of our own, or the ſouls of others, is always to doe that which is good; and though he can bring good out of evil, yet he never Commands, ordains or allows our evil for that end. * 1Sam.21.15.

But ſuch Preaching and Meetings as are in queſtion, are ſinfull acts. Which will appear (as by other reaſons which ſhall be ſhewed hereafter, ſo in this place onely) becauſe they are done in diſobedience and oppoſition to the known Laws of the Church and Kingdom wherein we live, and which we ſtand bound in Conſcience towards God, to obſerve and obey. I begin with the Laws of the Church.

The Eleventh Canon of the Church of *England* ſaith,

Whoſoever ſhall affirm or maintain that there are in this Realm other Meetings,

Aſſemblies or Congregations of the King's born-ſubjects, than by the Laws of this Realm are held and allowed, which may rightly challenge to themſelves the names of true and lawfull Churches, Let him be excommunicated, and not reſtored, but by the Arch-biſhop, after his repentance and revocation of ſuch his wicked errour.

The ſenſe of this Canon is large and comprehenſive, and contains in it, virtually, a prohibition of all Meetings, Aſſemblies or Congregations whatſoever which are not allowed by the Laws of the Land: as the Meetings in queſtion will, and (God willing) ſhall be made appear to be. Neither can it be reſtrained onely (if at all) to any other Meetings, than ſuch as are under pretence of joyning in religious worſhip, not authorized by the Laws of the Land, which (according to the title of the Canon) are called Conventicles; for there can be no other unlawfull Meetings, ſo called, for any other end, but onely theſe two, *viz.*

Firſt for Miniſters and Lay-men, or either of them, to joyn together, to make

make Rules, Orders or Constitutions in Causes Ecclesiastical, without the King's authority. And that is censured and forbidden as unlawfull in the twelfth Canon. Or else,

Secondly, to consult about a course to be taken, to impeach or deprave the Doctrine of the Church of *England*, the book of Common Prayer, or any part of the Government or Discipline established in the Church: And this is forbidden under pain of Excommunication in the 73 Canon. Any other end, for any other unlawfull Meeting or Assembly, other than what is aforesaid, cannot easily be imagined. Therefore (unless we will make the Reverend, Pious and Learned Authors and Composers of those Canons and Constitutions which are so solemnly established by Supreme authority, guilty of a gross tautology) this Canon flatly prohibits all Meetings, Assemblies or Congregations (except the publick, which are commanded and allowed by the Laws of the Land) of any manner of persons, in private houses, or elsewhere, which under pretence of religious worship, take upon them to be called Churches,

Beſides, it is expreſſed in ſuch terms, as are commonly competible to none, but ſuch Meetings, as are under pretence of religious worſhip. What other Meetings are commonly called *Congregations*, or do challenge to themſelves the name of *Churches*, but ſuch Meetings as are in queſtion?

The place and order of the Canon, do prove the ſame; for immediately after the *impugners of the King's Supremacy, the publick worſhip of God, Articles of Religion, Rites and Ceremonies, Government eſtabliſhed in the Church of* England, *the Authours of Schiſm, and maintainers of Schiſmaticks in the Church*, are cenſured; is ſubjoyned this Canon cenſuring *Conventicles*, as being the Nurſery of all the former.

In the 71 Canon; all Miniſters whatſoever are forbidden to *preach or adminiſter the holy Communion in any private houſe (except it be in time of neceſſity, when any is either ſo impotent, as that he cannot go to the Church, or very dangerouſly ſick)* under pain of *Excommunication.*

In the 72 Canon it is ordained, that *no Miniſter whatſoever ſhall without licence*

cence from the Biſhop of the Dioceſe, firſt obtained and had under his hand and ſeal, preſume to appoint any meetings for Sermons or Exerciſes, in Market-Towns or other places, either publickly or in private houſes, under pain of Suſpenſion for tho firſt fault, Excommunication for the ſecond, and Depoſition for the third.

Now if a Miniſter may not doe this in his own Pariſh, but onely in a caſe of neceſſity, much leſs may a ſtranger intrude himſelf into another man's Pariſh, where there is a Preaching Miniſtry eſtabliſhed by Law, and there ſet up a courſe of private houſe-preaching, adminiſtring of Sacraments, and performance of all Miniſterial acts, where there can be no need of his ſo doing, ſo much as pretended.

But it will be thought by ſome that the Laws and Conſtitutions of the Church, are not ſo greatly to be regarded, as that the breach of them ſhould be ſinfull; and that her *Canons* lay no ſuch obligation on Conſcience, as that the neglect of their obſervation and contrary practice ſhould be criminal. Nay ſuch is the ſtate and condition of our times, that it is rather thought

thought a vertue to deſpiſe them, than any fault to diſobey them: And they are reputed moſt pure and holy, who with greateſt boldneſs quarrel and cavil againſt the Authority, Government, and Lawfull Precepts of the Church.

Yet certainly the judgment and practice of Chriſtians in former ages, was otherwiſe. When vertue and true piety did more abound, they made more conſcience of obſerving the Precepts and Conſtitutions of the Church, which were made for decency, order, and good government. And if any frowardly, wilfully, or conſtantly lived in any oppoſition, or contrariety thereunto, they were adjudged as evil doers. * *Nec his quiſquam contradicit, quiſquis ſane vel tenuiter expertus eſt, quæ ſunt jura Eccleſiaſtica.* And truly I ſee not why the ſame regard and reſpect ought not to be ſhew'n in the obſervation of the Laws of our Church now, as hath been to the like Laws and Canons in former and purer times.

* *Baſil.* de Spir. Sanct. c. 27.

Eſpecially if we enquire into theſe four things;

1. What

1. What Power the Church hath to make Laws, Canons and Conſtitutions?
2. Who were the Authours and Compoſers of theſe, of our Church?
3. What is the ſubject matter of them?
4. What hath been the judgment of Divines, of unqueſtionable learning, judgment and piety, concerning Laws, Canons and Conſtitutions of this nature?

Concerning the firſt. That the Church hath a *maternal* power to decree, and make Laws to bind all her *children*, is ſuch a clear truth, as no ſober perſon (I think) will queſtion.

By [*Church*] I underſtand not all the number of the faithfull, but thoſe, that have the lawfull rule and government of the Church. Which is the ſenſe, that our Saviour Chriſt uſeth it in, when he ſaith, * *Dic Eccleſiæ*, tell the Church; for, there is *Eccleſia collectiva*, and *Eccleſia repreſentativa*. I take it in the latter ſenſe. * Mat. 18. 17.

By

Nihil cuiquam largiri poteſt humana indulgentia, ubi intercedit & legem tribuit divina præſcriptio. Cyp. *Epiſt.* 4.

By [*Laws*] I underſtand not any new Article of faith, or any thing contrary to what God hath commanded in the holy Scriptures. For it is a true maxim (whoever was the Authour of it) *Poteſtas deſcendit, non aſcendit.* None have power in thoſe things that are above them, but in thoſe things which are beneath them. So the Church hath no power in thoſe things, which are above her, but in thoſe things which are below her. Now all Doctrines of faith, and other things already commanded of God, are above the Church, and out of her reach, ſo that ſhe cannot meddle with them, by any Law *de novo*, otherwiſe than to ſee them duly obeyed and obſerved.

But as for things of an indifferent and adiaphorous nature, ſerving to external order and decency, in theſe ſhe hath power, to ordain and make Laws and Conſtitutions, though not contrary to, yet other than what are already made in God's word, holding ſtill, as near as ſhe can, to the general rules of Scripture. The doctrine of Salvation is always, in all places, the ſame, and can never be changed; But external rites

rites and order, are alterable and variable according to the diverſity of time and place, and the variety of the minds and manners of men. The Church of the Jews had power of ordaining other things, than what were expreſly ſet down in God's word, and that for perpetual obſervation. She ordained the two days of * *Purim* as perpetual feſtivals. † *Moreover, Judas and his brethren, with the whole congregation of Iſrael, ordained, that the days of the dedication of the Altar ſhould be kept in their ſeaſon, from year to year, by the ſpace of eight days, from the five and twentieth day of the month Caſleu, with mirth and gladneſs.* This feaſt was inſtituted by *Judas Machabeus* and his brethren, when *Antiochus Epiphanes* was expelled out of *Jeruſalem*, the worſhip of God reſtored, and the Temple (prophaned by the Heathen) again conſecrated, which was about 167 years before the Coming of Chriſt. Which feaſt was yearly kept ever after, and our Saviour Chriſt himſelf || honoured it with his own preſence. And if the Jewiſh Church had that power, why then hath not the Chriſtian

* Eſth. 9. 20, 21.
† 1 Mac. 4. 59.
|| Joh. 10. 22.

ſtian the like? And that the Primitive Church of Chriſtians had, and did exerciſe the like power, is plain to any that ſhall reade *Act.* 15. and 1 *Cor.* 11.

Secondly, The Authours and Compoſers of theſe Canons and Conſtitutions Eccleſiaſtical, were the reverend, learned and godly *Biſhops, Deans,* and *Arch-Deacons, and other Clergy-men of every Dioceſe,* within the *Province of Canterbury*; met together * *neither with multitude nor with tumult,* but lawfully and duly call'd and ſummoned, by virtue of the King's Majeſties Writ, and receiving legal confirmation of that which was done by them. So then, the compoſers of thoſe Canons, were ſuch perſons as were ordained of God to rule the Church, and to order what in their Wiſedom ſhould be thought convenient, to whom in all things (not contrary to God's will revealed in his word) we are commanded obedience, *Luk.* 12.42. *Heb.* 13.7,17, 24. 1 *Pet.* 2. 13, 14.

* Act. 24.18.

Thirdly, The ſubject matter of theſe Canons and Conſtitutions is of ſuch things as concern External order, decency

cency and edification, which God hath not particularly determined in Scripture, but hath left to the rulers and governours of the Church, to ordain and appoint within the compaſs of that general rule of the Apoſtle, * *Let all things be done unto edifying, and in order.* In which place, thoſe things that concern the external polity of the Church, are generally expreſſed, but the particulars are not mentioned, but left to the wiſedom and liberty of the Church.

* 1 Cor. 14 26, 40.

Fourthly, What have been the judgment of Divines (of whoſe learning and piety the Church of God never yet ſince their times, made the leaſt doubt or queſtion) concerning Laws, Canons and Conſtitutions of this nature? They have always thought them ſacred and venerable; and their obſervation an act of Religion and Obedience to the general commands of God. Inſtead of many, take a few teſtimonies of Divines of the higheſt rank, both foreign and domeſtick. Two I ſhall quote out of learned *Zanchy*, † *Quatenus hæ leges conſentaneæ ſunt cum Sacris Literis, aut ſaltem non ſunt diſ-*

† *Hier. Zanch.* T. 4. de trad. Theſ. 4. p. 202.

diſſentaneæ; Eatenus & veræ ſunt Eccleſiaſticæ, eoque admittendæ, & nos illis obedientiam debemus ac reverentiam; So far forth as theſe Conſtitutions are agreeable with the Scriptures, or at leaſt, not diſagreeing with them, ſo far forth they are truly Eccleſiaſtical, and to be received, and we owe reverence and obedience to them. And he gives his reaſon in theſe words: *Si Conſentaneæ ſunt hæ leges verbo Dei, qui illas rejicit, verbum Dei rejicit. Si non repugnant, contemnit Eccleſiam Dei qui illas contemnit; Contemptus autem Eccleſiæ, quam Deo ingratus ſit, apparet, cum aliis ex locis Sacrarum Literarum, ubi illam magnificat; tum maxime ex Evangelio, Mat.* 18. 17. If thoſe Laws are agreeable with the word of God, he that rejecteth them, rejecteth the word of God; if they are not contrary to the word of God, he that rejecteth them deſpiſeth the Church of God; and how odious a thing unto the Almighty it is, that any ſhould deſpiſe his Church, as it appears in many places of Scripture, where the Church is magnified, ſo eſpecially in *Mat.* 18. 17. where God hath commanded that that perſon ſhould be accounted

accounted as *an heathen man and a Publican*, who hears and obeys not the *Church*.

Hear the ſame Learned Authour again. ‖ *Credo ea, quæ a piis patribus in nomine Domini congregatis, communi omnium Conſenſu, citra ullam Sacrarum Literarum Contradictionem definita & recepta fuerunt: Ea etiam (quanquam haud ejuſdem cum Sacris Literis authoritatis.) A SPIRITU SANCTO ESSE.* Thoſe things (ſaith he) which have been concluded and received by the Holy Fathers, gathered together in the Name of God, agreed on by Common-conſent, and without any Contradiction of the Scripture (although they are not of the ſame Authority with the Scriptures,) Yet, I beleive even thoſe things to be from THE HOLY GHOST. *Hinc fit, ut quæ ſunt hujuſmodi*, &c. Hence it comes to paſs, that thoſe things which are of this nature, I neither will diſallow, nor dare I with a good Conſcience. *Quis enim ego ſum*, &c. For who am I, that I ſhould diſſallow that which the whole Church approves of? So far that worthy Authour.

‖ Hier. Zanch. T. 8. *obſ. in Confeſs. ſuam cap.* 25. *Aph.* 10. 11.

The next, whoſe judgment in this

caſe I ſhall produce, is Mr. *Calvin*, in his Commentary on the Epiſtle to the *Corinthians.* † *Quinetiam hinc colligere promptum eſt, has poſteriores (ſcilicet Eccleſiæ) Leges, non eſſe habendas pro humanis traditionibus; quandoquidem fundatæ ſint in hoc generali mandato, & liquidam approbationem habent, quaſi ex ore CHRISTI IPSIUS.* Where ſhewing the difference betwixt the tyrannical Edicts of the Pope, and the Laws of the true Church, in which, diſcipline and order are contained, he ſaith; Whence it is eaſie to be gathered, that the Laws of the Church, are not to be accounted humane traditions, ſeeing they are founded upon the general precept of the Apoſtle, and have as clear an approbation, as if they had been delivered from the mouth of Chriſt Himſelf. For, ſaith he elſewhere, ‖ *Dico ſic eſſe humanam traditionem, ut ſimul ſit divina.* It is ſo an humane tradition, as that it is alſo divine. *Dei eſt, quatenus eſt pars decoris illius, cujus cura & obſervatio nobis per Apoſtolum commendatur: hominum autem, quatenus ſimpliciter deſignat, quod in genere fuit indicatum magis quam expoſitum.* It is of God ſo far forth as it is

† Calv. Com. in 1 Cor. 14. 40.

‖ Calv. *Inſtit.* L. 4. c. 10. *ſect.* 30.

is a part of that order and decency, the care and obſervation whereof is commanded, and commended to us by the Apoſtle: It is of men ſo far forth, as it ſimply names or ſignifies that, which was in general uttered, rather than particularly expounded.

Take a third teſtimony from that burning and ſhining Light of the French Church. * *Licet quæ a regia & aliis Legitimis poteſtatibus rite præcipiuntur, ſunt de jure poſitivo: quod tamen illis poſtquam ita conſtitutæ ſunt, pareatur, eſt de jure divino; cum Legitimæ poteſtates omnes a Deo ſint, Deique vices in ſuo ordine teneant; dumque illis obedimus, eorumque præcepta obſervamus, Deo pariter in illis paremus, Deique præceptum & voluntatem exequimur.* Although thoſe things which are commanded by the King's Authority, or other lawfull Powers under him, are of poſitive right: Yet it is of divine inſtitution that we ſhould obey them in thoſe things, which they command; ſeeing all lawfull Powers are of God, and ſupply the place of God in their ſeveral orders: Therefore while we obey them, and keep their Commandments,

* Molin. *de juſt. tr.* 2. *diſp.* 27.

we obey God in them, and ſo fulfill the Will and Command of God.

Learned *Beza* ſhall be the next that ſhall give in his verdict to this truth; † *Nam etſi Conſcientias proprie ſolus Deus ligat*, &c. For although God alone can properly bind the Conſcience; yet ſo far as the Church with reſpect to order and decency, and thereby to Edification, doth rightly enjoyn, or make Laws, thoſe Laws are to be obſerved by all pious perſons; and they do ſo far bind the Conſcience, as that no man wittingly and willingly, with a purpoſe to diſobey, can either doe what is ſo forbidden, or omit what is ſo commanded, without Sin.

† Beza *Epiſt.* 20.

To theſe above named add we in the laſt place the verdict of our own learned and judicious Mr. *Hooker*. ‖ To the Laws (ſaith he) thus made (*id eſt.* according to the general Law of Nature, and without contradiction to the poſitive Law of Scripture) and received by a whole Church, they which live within the boſome of that Church, muſt not think it a matter of indifference, either to yield, or not to yield obedience. * Is it a ſmall offence to *deſpiſe the Church*

‖ Hooker *Eccleſ. polit. L.* 3. *Sect.* 9.

* 1 Cor. 11. 22.

of

of God? † *My ſon keep thy Father's Commandments* (*ſaith* Solomon) *and forget not thy Mothers inſtructions, bind them both always about thine heart.* It doth not ſtand with the duty we owe to our heavenly Father, that to the ordinance of our Mother the Church we ſhould ſhew our ſelves diſobedient. Let us not ſay we keep the Commandments of one, when we break the Laws of the other: For unleſs we obſerve both, we obey neither. And what doth let, but that we may obſerve both, when they are not one to the other in any ſort repugnant? Yea, which is more, the Laws of the Church thus made, God himſelf doth in ſuch ſort authorize, that to deſpiſe them, is to deſpiſe in them, him. Thus far that moſt judicious Authour.

† Prov. 6. 20.

Yea one of the reformed Churches have put it into their very Confeſſion, ‖ *That thoſe Laws of the Church deſerve to be eſteemed divine, rather than humane Conſtitutions.*

‖ *Confeſs. Suev. in Harm Confeſs.* 8. 17. *p.* 290.

From all which it appears, that Eccleſiaſtical Canons and Conſtitutions are not merely man's Laws, but God's alſo; both becauſe they are compoſed and framed by thoſe Fathers, by divine Au-

thority, and have their general foundation in Scripture; and alſo becauſe they are ordained for the Glory of God, for Edification, order and decency of the Church, and the better fulfilling and keeping the Laws of God. For as we have a Command from Chriſt, to tell the Church when any one is refractary and perverſe: So have they which are complained of to the Church, that Command from Chriſt alſo, to hear the Voice of God in the Church; and in diſobeying the Church, they diſobey God. And if Children and Servants, are bound by the Law of God, to obey their Parents and Maſters in all things that are reaſonable, honeſt and juſt, and in their obedience, they obey and ſerve God himſelf (*Eph.* 6. 1. *Col.* 3. 20. 24. *Tit.* 2. 9. 10.) then it can be no leſs pleaſing to God, that Chriſtians, who live in the boſome of the Church, ſhould be obedient and conformable unto the lawfull Precepts and Conſtitutions of their ſpiritual Mother, the Church of Chriſt, and the Rulers thereof. It is very truly ſaid by *Calvin*, *Semper nimia moroſitas eſt ambitioſa.* A frowardneſs and aptneſs to quarrell with the proceedings

of

of the Church, is accompanied with ambition and pride. It is not becauſe the Church takes too much power on her, but becauſe they would be under none. It is ambition, to have all Government in their own hands, that is the Cauſe, why ſome will not be ſubject to any.

All which hath been ſaid of this matter is agreeable with the Doctrine of the Church of *England*; who in her twentieth Article ſaith, *The Church hath power to decree and make Laws.* So in her 34*th* Article: *That whoſoever through his private judgment, willingly and purpoſely, doth break the Traditions and Ceremonies of the Church, which be not repugnant to the word of God, offendeth againſt the Common order of the Church, hurteth the Authority of the Magiſtrate, and woundeth the Conſcience of the weak Brethren.* Where, by (*traditions*) I ſuppoſe is meant the Laws and Canons of the Church, as the words following do intimate, which ſpeak of the *Common order of the Church*, and *Authority of the Magiſtrate.*

St. Paul *calleth Eccleſiaſtical Laws and Conſtitutions of the Church of* Corinth παραδόσεις, *traditions.* 1 Cor. 11. 2.

Thus much of the Laws of the Church,

Neither are ſuch meetings onely againſt the Laws of the Church, but againſt ſundry ſtatute Laws of the Kingdom alſo, in that behalf made and provided.

35 *Eliz.* 1. In the Statute of 35 *Eliz.* 1. It is provided; *that if any perſon or perſons above* 16 *years old, ſhall refuſe to repair to ſome Church, Chapel or uſual place of Common-prayer, to hear divine Service, and receive the Communion; or come to, and be preſent at, any Aſſemblies, Conventicles, or Meetings, under Colour or pretence of any Exerciſe of Religion, contrary to the Laws and Statutes: And if any perſon ſhall obſtinately refuſe to repair to ſome Church, Chapel or uſual place of Common-prayer; or by any motion, perſuaſion, inticement, or allurement of any other, willingly joyn in, or be preſent at, any ſuch Aſſemblies, Conventicles, or Meetings, under Colour or pretence of any ſuch Exerciſe of Religion, contrary to the Laws and Statutes of this Realm, as is aforeſaid* (which refers to other Statutes formerly made, and yet of force againſt Conventicles, as well as this one) *ſhall be committed to priſon, and there remain without bail, untill he conform, and untill*

till he make an open Submiſſion in the words ſet down in the Statute. viz.

I. A. B. do humbly acknowledge and confeſs, that I have grievouſly offended God, in contemning her Majeſties Godly and lawfull Government and Authority, by abſenting my ſelf from Church, and from hearing divine Service, contrary to the godly Laws and Statutes of this Realm, and in uſing and frequenting unlawfull and diſorderly Conventicles and Aſſemblies, under Colour and pretence of Exerciſe of Religion: And I am heartily ſorry for the ſame, &c. *And I do promiſe and proteſt without any diſſimulation, that from henceforth I will from time to time obey and perform her Majeſties Laws and Statutes in repairing to Church, and hearing divine Service, and doe my utmoſt endeavour to maintain and defend the ſame.*

Neither can it be pretended (as it is by ſome) that this Statute was made, or ſtands in force, againſt any other ſort of People, than thoſe in queſtion, *viz.* againſt Popiſh recuſants onely and

and not againſt Proteſtant diſſenters, as they call themſelves: The anſwer is eaſie out of the words of the ſaid Statute. For in the beginning of the Statute, the Perſons that are concerned in obedience to it, are expreſſed in theſe general and large words. *Any perſon or perſons whatſoever above the Age of* 16 *which ſhall refuſe to repair to Church, and willingly join in and be preſent at any Conventicle or Meeting*, &c. Which words comprehend and take in Perſons of all Religions, Sects and Perſuaſions whatſoever.

And whereas the penalty of the Statute to all that ſhall refuſe Obedience and Conformity to it, is abjuration of the Realm, or to be proceeded againſt as Felons. There is a Proviſo toward the End of the Statute, that fixeth the penalty altogether upon Proteſtant recuſants, and not on Popiſh; In theſe words: *Provided that no Popiſh recuſant, or feme Covert ſhall be compelled or bound to abjure by virtue of this Act.* And leſt the *Popiſh* recuſants ſhould be the onely Perſons therein meant or intended, the Conventiclers of our Age make themſelves more perfect Recuſants than that

that Statute ſuppoſeth: For whereas that makes abſence from the Prayers of the Church, for one Month together, a Crime ſufficient to render them obnoxious to the penalties of that Act; theſe men (for the moſt part) withdraw themſelves for many Years together, and, for ought I ſee, if they are let alone, reſolve ſo to doe all the days of their lives.

In Anno 22. *Caroli* 2*di Regis*, there was a Statute made to prevent and ſuppreſs ſeditious Conventicles (as the Title of that Statute truly calls them) wherein Every Perſon of the Age of 16 years and upward, that ſhall be preſent at any Aſſembly. Conventicle or Meeting, under Colour or pretence of any Exerciſe of Religion, in other manner than according to the Liturgy and Practice of the Church of *England*, in any place within the Kingdom of *England*, Dominion of *Wales*, and Town of *Berwick* upon *Tweed*, at which Conventicle or meeting there ſhall be 5 perſons or more aſſembled together, is made liable to ſuffer the penalties of 5*s* for his firſt fault, and for his ſecond 10*s* (and ſo onward) the Preacher to ſuffer the penalty

nalty of 20*ll.* And the owner of the houſe or ground, that ſhall wittingly and willingly ſuffer ſuch Conventicle, Meeting, or unlawfull Aſſembly to be held, to ſuffer the penalty of 20*ll.*

This treatiſe was written and compoſed before the Statute to prevent and ſuppreſs ſeditious Conventicles Car. 2. 22 *was made.*

In the late Act for Uniformity, all *Non-conformiſt* Miniſters are diſabled and prohibited from *preaching any Sermon or Lecture*, indefinitely, either publick or private. And for as much as the King's Majeſty by the Law of God and the Land, of right is, and ought to be maſter of all the aſſemblings together of any of his Subjects; therefore what Meetings ſoever, are not allowed and authorized by the Laws of the Realm, are adjudged by the Learned in the Laws, to fall within the compaſs of thoſe Statutes, that forbid and puniſh *Riots and unlawfull Aſſemblies*; and are, or may juſtly be preſumed to be, *in terrorem populi*, and in the Event it is to be feared, will prove to be contrary to the peace of our Sovereign Lord the King. And by the * Law, all the King's Liege-people are commanded to aſſiſt in the ſuppreſſing of them, upon pain of impriſonment, and to make fine and ranſome to the King.

* 2. *H.* 5. 8.

Not-

Notwithſtanding all which good Laws, this practice hath continued in the Church theſe ſeveral years, and ſtill doth (notwithſtanding His Majeſties reinforcement of their execution by his late Proclamation) in open defiance and contempt of all Authority, as if the Laws of the Church and Realm were but *fulmen inane*, a ſhadow of a Cloud, that vaniſheth as ſoon as it is made; and as if obedience to Magiſtracy were no part of Chriſtian duty.

Concerning theſe Laws of the Realm (to ſilence clamour) I will touch lightly at five things.

1. That the King being next under God, within his Dominions, ſupreme in the Church on Earth, hath Power and Authority over the Perſons of Miniſters, as well as of any other his Subjects. He being *Cuſtos utriuſque tabulæ*, having both tables committed to him, as well the firſt that concerns our religious duties to God, as the other that concerns our civil duties to men, may and ought to make ſuch Laws as conduce as well to † the peace and order in the Church, as *godlineſs and honeſty*.

† 1 Tim. 2. 2.

|| *Pertinet hoc ad reges ſeculi Chriſtianos, ut*

|| Aug. *tract.* 11. *in* Johan.

ut temporibus ſuis pacatam velint matrem ſuam Eccleſiam, unde ſpiritualiter nati ſint; (Saith St. *Auguſtine.*) He may upon juſt Cauſe depoſe, diſcharge, and put to ſilence, any Miniſter whatſoever within his Dominions, as to the Execution of his Miniſterial function, either in publick or private. Miniſters, as well as others, are under civil juriſdiction. For * *Every Soul is bound to be ſubject to the higher powers.* And † *Si omnis anima, cur non eſt veſtra? Quis vos excepit ex univerſalitate?* If every ſoul, then the Souls of Miniſters as well as others: For who excepted them from the univerſality? *Qui dicit omnem, excludit nullam.* He that ſaith every Soul, excludeth no Soul. It was impiouſly ſaid of || that Jeſuite, *That the Clergy ought not for any cauſe to be cited before the civil Magiſtrate, or to be judged by him; it being abſurd that the ſheep ſhould judge the ſhepherd. Chriſt* himſelf taking upon him man's nature, was ſubject to humane Authority, ſubmitting himſelf to *Caiaphas* and *Pilate*, ſo far as to be apprehended, arraigned, condemned and executed.

* Rom. 13. 1.

† Bern. *Epiſt.* 42. *ad Archiepiſ. Senovenſem.*

|| Bellarm. *de clericis.* c. 28.

True

True (ſaith *Bellarmine*) *de facto*, Chriſt was ſubject to *Pilate*, but *de jure*, he ought not to have been ſo: And that power over him which he did acknowledge, was given to *Pilate* from above, (*John* 19. 11.) was onely a bare permiſſion.

To which we anſwer; if we ſimply reſpect the Dignity of Chriſt's perſon, being the Son of God, then we acknowledge that he neither was, nor could be ſubject to any man. But if we conſider the diſpenſation of his incarnation, and that form of a Servant which he took on himſelf, whereby he became Man and under the Law, then *de jure*, as he was a Jew, he was a Subject to that power, which at that time had the rule. And what *Pilate* unjuſtly did againſt Chriſt, that, we grant, God did onely permit; But he had a lawfull Jurisdiction over his perſon, not by God's permiſſion onely, but by his effectual will. Anſ. 1.

But ſuppoſe it were true which *Bellarmine* ſaith; yet the Example of Chriſt maketh never the leſs for the Confirmation of the truth, for which I allege it. For if he ſubmitted himſelf to a power Anſ. 2.

er over him that was uſurped onely, and not approved of by God, but barely permitted; then certainly they are very far from the Humility that was in Chriſt Jeſus, that refuſe to be obedient and ſubject to juſt and lawfull powers, which are ordained of God and ſet over them. And therefore when Chriſt ſaid, *date quæ ſunt Cæſaris Cæſari*, give unto *Cæſar* the things that are *Cæſar*'s, he ſpake as well to the high Prieſts, Scribes and Phariſees, as to the People.

St. *Paul*, whoſe apoſtolical authority and ſpiritual Weapons, were able to bring down every oppoſition, yet acknowledged that he muſt * be judged by *Cæſar*, as his lawfull Superiour. *Bellarmine*'s diſtinction of *de facto*, and *de jure*, will ſtand him in no more ſtead here, than it did before; for to ſay, the Roman Emperour was St. *Paul*'s Judge *de facto*, but not *de jure*, is to doe St. *Paul* a manifeſt injury. For if the Emperour had no right to judge him, why would he then make uſe of the benefit of an *appeal to Cæſar* † when no body compelled him ſo to doe? And why did he at another time ſhelter himſelf under the Privilege ‖ of a Citizen of *Rome*?

* Act. 25. 10. 11.

† Act. 25. 11.

‖ Act. 16. 37.

Rome? By his very profeſſing himſelf to be a Roman, he doth acknowledge himſelf to be ſubject to the ſame Laws, and to the ſame Lord, that other Romans were; and that he had no more exemption or immunity from ſubjection and obedience to the *Roman* Laws, than that *Tribune* who ſaid * *with a great ſum have I obtained this freedom.* * Act. 22. 28.

The Scriptures do give us an inſtance of King *Solomon*'s depoſing *Abiathar* from the Prieſthood. The text ſaith † that *King* Solomon *did thruſt out* Abiathar *from being Prieſt before the Lord.* † 1 King. 2. 27. Neither doth the Holy Ghoſt mention this hiſtorically onely, as a thing done; but by way of approbation, as a thing well and rightly done. This the *Jeſuites* themſelves (who are the onely men, I know, who queſtion the Sovereign power in this Caſe) confeſs. Remarkable to this purpoſe are the words of one of them. || *Alii non dubitant dicere Solomonem in eo facto injuſte egiſſe, uſurpando poteſtatem, quam non habebat; ego vero id affirmare non audeo, propter verba Scripturæ quæ ex* Cap. 3. *allegavi: Et quia apud antiquos patres & expoſitores non invenio factum illud inter* || Suarez. *defenſ. fid. Cath. l.* 3. *c.* 26. *num.* 7.

peccata Solomonis numeratum, ſive in culpam tributum. Some (ſaith he) doubt not to ſay that *Solomon* in that Act did unjuſtly, in uſurping more power than did belong to him: But I dare not ſay ſo, both for the words of the Scripture, which I have before alleged out of the third Chapter; and alſo, becauſe among the ancient Fathers and Expoſitours, I find not this Act of his, reckoned for any of *Solomon*'s ſins, or him blamed for it. The words which he ſaith he alleged out of the third Chapter, are theſe.

* 1 King. 3.3. * *And Solomon loved the Lord his God, walking in the ways of David his Father, onely he ſacrificed and burnt incenſe in the high places.* Which exception (ſaith he) ſhews that King *Solomon* untill that time, had kept the Commandments of God, and conſequently ſinned not in that fact in depoſing *Abiathar.* And if the Kings of *Iſrael* might execute ſuch power, why not the Kings of *England* alſo? Who will ſay that the Power of Chriſtian Kings and Princes is ſhorter now, than that of the Kings of *Judah*, and the religious Princes of the Primitive Chriſtian Church was? That the nurſing Fathers under the Goſpel are abridged

bridged in Authority, of what they were under the Law?

And the reaſon, and wiſedom of this Nation in *Parliament*, hath adjudged this to be a juſt Cauſe of ſuch depoſition and ſilencing of any, when he ſhall refuſe to ſubmit, and be obedient and conformable to ſuch Laws and Conſtitutions, as they have declared to be † *Very comfortable to all good People deſirous to live in Chriſtian Converſation; moſt profitable to the State of the Realm, upon which the Mercy, Favour and Bleſſing of Almighty God is in no-wiſe ſo readily and plentifully powered, as by Common-Prayer, due uſing of the Sacraments, and often preaching of the Goſpel with devotion of the hearers.* And ‖ *that nothing conduceth more to the ſetling the peace of this Nation (which is deſired of all good men) nor the honour of our Religion and the Propagation thereof, than an univerſal Agreement in the publick Worſhip of Almighty God.* Which is a thing ſo amiable and excellent in it ſelf, that it hath extracted an acknowledgment and commendation of it from the Mouths of the Divines of the *Presbyterian* perſuaſion themſelves. For in a

† *Act. of uniform. p.* 68.

‖ Ibid. *pag.* 71.

Book of theirs entitled, *A Vindication of the Presbyterial Government, publiſhed by the Miniſters and Elders met together in a provincial Aſſembly*, November 2*d.* 1649. They have theſe words. * *It is the Duty of all Chriſtians to ſtudy to enjoy the Ordinances of Chriſt, in unity and uniformity as far as is poſſible.* (Which our Liturgy ſets up, by preſcribing the manner of it. Whereas otherwiſe all will be left to the chance of mens wills; which (ſaith Doctour *Hammond*) † can no more be thought like to concur in one form, than *Democritus*'s Atomes to have met together into a world of beautifull Creatures, without any kind of providence to diſpoſe them.) *For the Scriptures call for unity and uniformity, as well as purity and verity. And ſurely it is not impoſſible to obtain this ſo much deſired unity and uniformity, becauſe that God hath promiſed that his Children ſhall ſerve him with one heart, and with one way, and with one ſhoulder. And that in the days of the Goſpel, there ſhall be one Lord, and his Name one. And Chriſt hath prayed, that we may be all one, as the Father is in him, and he in the Father. And he adds a moſt prevalent reaſon,*

* *Vindicat. of Presbyt.* p. 119. 120.

† *View of the Directory.* p. 23.

ſon, That the World may believe that thou haſt ſent me. Nothing hinders the propagation of the Goſpel ſo much as the diviſion and ſeparation of Goſpel-profeſſours. If it be God's promiſe, and Chriſt's prayer, it is certainly a thing poſſible to be obtained, and a duty incumbent upon all good Chriſtians to labour after.

Secondly, as it cannot be denyed that the Civil Magiſtrate hath authority over the perſons of Miniſters, ſo 'tis as true, that he hath power to act for the regulation of all their Eccleſiaſtical meetings and aſſemblies; though not to act *in ſacris*, yet *circa ſacra, non ad docendum, quod eſt ſacerdotale*, yet, *ad jubendum, quod eſt regale.* As ‖ *Conſtantine* the Emperour told the Biſhops whom he invited to a banquet, ὑμεῖς μὲν τῶν εἴσω τῆς ἐκκλησίας, ἐγὼ δὲ τῆς ἐκτὸς ἐπίσκοπος. Ye are Biſhops within the Church, and I am ordained by God's Grace a Biſhop without the Church. That the King of *England* (ſaith Sir *Henry Spelman*) * is *perſona mixta*, endowed as well with Eccleſiaſtical authority, as with temporal, is not onley a ſolid poſition of the Common Law of this

‖ Euſeb. *de vit.* Conſtant. *l.* 4. *c.* 24.

* *Sir* H. Spelman *de non temer. Eccl. p.* 21, 22.

Land, but confirmed unto us by the continual practice of our ancient Kings, ever ſince and before the Conqueſt, even in hotteſt times of Popiſh fervency: For this cauſe at their Coronation, they are not onely Crowned with the *Diadem* of the Kingdom, and girt with the Sword of juſtice to ſignifie their temporal authority, but are anointed alſo with † the oil of Prieſthood, and cloathed *ſtola Sacerdotali* and *veſte Dalmatica*, to demonſtrate this their Eccleſiaſtical juriſdiction; whereby the King is ſaid to be in Law, the *Supremus ordinarius*, and in regard thereof among other Eccleſiaſtical rights and prerogatives belonging to him, is to have all the tithes (through the Kingdom) in the places that are not of any Pariſh, for ſome ſuch there be, and namely, divers Foreſts. Magiſtrates (we grant) can neither preach the word, nor adminiſter the Sacraments, any more than *Uzziah* could burn incenſe, or offer Sacrifice to God: Yet they are nurſing Fathers of the Church, not to give the milk of the word and Sacraments, but of diſciplipline and Government. During the old Teſtament times,

† *Reges ſacro oleo uncti ſunt ſpiritualis juriſdictionis capaces.* 33 Ed. 3. *Tit. Aid de Roy.* 103. *ex Dom.* Cook *Rep. part* 5.

times, the King's power extended || to the inſtituting and commanding of ſuch Religious meetings, as do no where appear to be either inſtituted, or commanded of God, or his Servant *Moſes*. v. g. The ſolemnity of the *Paſſover*, which was to be kept by the Law of *Moſes* but ſeven days, by a ſpecial Command of * King *Hezekiah*, with the conſent of the people, was commanded to be kept other ſeven days. The Feaſt of *Purim*, in Commemoration of the deliverance of the Nation of the *Jews*, under *Ahaſuerus* the *Perſian* King, was inſtituted by † *Heſter* and *Mordecai*. *Moſes* onely Commanded one day of Faſting to be yearly obſerved, (*viz.*) in the ſeventh month; But the Kings and Magiſtrates of the people inſtituted other yearly ſolemn Faſts: So that in the times of the latter Prophets, there were four yearly Faſts obſerved, (*viz.*) beſides that yearly in the ſeventh month, three others || in the fourth, fifth, and tenth month. Now if they may by their authority inſtitute and enlarge, why not then as well abridge and reſtrain? Provided the publick aſ-

|| Sanderſon *de oblig. Conſc. Lect. 6. Sect. 31.*

* 2 Chron. 30.

† Eſther 9.

|| Zach. 8. 19.

ſembling together of God's people, according to Divine appointment, be no-way prejudiced or infringed. If the Magiſtrate may appoint, then he may forbid too: Law, reaſon and ſenſe teach, that appointing and forbidding belong to one power.

Thirdly, neither can there be any ground of quarrell made againſt the juſtneſs of theſe Laws forbidding Conventicles. For (as it is well obſerved by * a worthy Divine before me) that Law is undoubtedly juſt, in which there is a concurrence of the juſtice of theſe four cauſes of Law, wherein the whole of a Law doth conſiſt, (*viz.*) the juſtice of the *final*, *efficient*, *formal* and *material* cauſes of Laws.

* *Mr.* Jo. Mart. *in Serm. on* Deut. 17. 12.

1. The *final* Cauſe or End of a juſt Law, is that it tend to the common and publick good. And of this the Lawgivers are to be Judges, and not the Subjects. And moſt unreaſonable it were that what the Lawgivers ſhall adjudge to be for the publick good, ſhould be made to yield to private and particular mens intereſts.

2. The *efficient* Cauſe of a juſt Law, is the lawfull power of the perſon, or perſons

perſons in authority, that made the Law. Otherwiſe Laws are onely ſo in name, and not indeed. And as *Aquinas*, † *Violentiæ magis quam leges*; They are rather acts of violence than Laws. And it is a ſure rule in Logick, *Cauſa æquivoca non infert effectum*; a ſentence paſſed by one that is no Judge, binds not the party.

† Aquin. 1, 2. *queſt.* 96.

3. The right *form* of a Law, is that it be a rule of rectitude for humane actions, according to the guidance of diſtributive juſtice, giving to every one according to his demerits.

4. The *matter* of a Law, muſt be a thing that is good according to the rule of univerſal juſtice, at leaſt indifferent.

A Law wherein theſe 4 things concur muſt needs be good and obligatory to all perſons that are concerned in it.

Now in which of theſe the aforeſaid Laws againſt Conventicles are faulty, I know not. Perhaps ſome will ſay, in the latter; the Matter of it is not good, to lay a reſtraint on Religious Aſſemblies and Meetings.

It

Anſw. 1. It were ſo indeed, if *Religious Aſſemblies* and *Meetings* were forbidden. But I think it will appear in the ſequel, that theſe in queſtion are not ſuch, whatſoever ſome conceive them to be.

Anſw. 2. It were ſo, if *all* Religious Meetings or Aſſemblies were forbidden: But (bleſſed be God) 'tis otherwiſe. We ‖ Act. 19. 39. have ſtill ‖ τὰς ἐννόμους ἐκκλησίας, the publick, ancient, lawfull and orderly aſſemblies allowed, commanded and encouraged by Authority, in all places of the Kingdom; and onely ſuch meetings by the Law forbidden, as are private, new and diſorderly, and tend to Faction and Schiſm, and ſuch other evils as are not without trembling to be mentioned.

Anſw. 3. Laſtly I anſwer, with that learned Caſuiſt Dr. * *Sanderſon*, that it is not neceſſarily requiſite, that whatſoever is eſtabliſhed by Law, ſhould be *bonum poſitive*, that it ſhould be an act of vertue; but it is ſufficient if it be *bonum negative*, that is, nothing ſinfull or morally evil, as all vices are. Otherwiſe there ſhould be no room for Laws about middle and indifferent things. And ſuppoſe a Law ſhould be de-

* Sand. *de obligat. Conſc. Lect.* 6. *Sect.* 15.

defective in regard of the *efficient*, *final*, or *formal* cause; yet if the *matter* of it be such, as may be done without sin, it binds the Subject to obedience. And that the forbearance of such illegal meetings as are in question, may be done without sin; and that those dissenting brethren, who have been ejected for their non-compliance in Uniformity to the present legal establishment, being under a legal restraint as to the use of their Ministerial Function, may without sin forbear the irregular use of their gifts and labours in the said private meetings, to the undermining and confronting of the Laws, the increase of Sedition, Schism, and divers other Horrid Evils, I think is out of question. Learned *Beza* thought so, or else he had never returned such an answer, as he did, to that Case of Conscience which was proposed to him, by certain *English* Ministers, who in the Reign of *Q. Eliz.* were silenced for non-conformity. The case proposed being, Whether they might, or ought not to preach, notwithstanding their being prohibited by man's law? His answer *verbatim* is, † *Tertium illud*

† Bez. *Epist. ad quosdam Eccles. Anglic. fratres. p.* 97.

lud, nempe ut contra Regiam Majeſtatem, & Epiſcoporum voluntatem Miniſterio ſuo fungantur magis etiam exhorreſcimus propter eas cauſas, quæ tacentibus etiam nobis, ſatis intelligi poſſunt. He was ſo far from thinking it lawfull, that he trembled at the thought of ſuch a thing, that they ſhould exerciſe their Miniſtry contrary to the *Queen's* Laws, and the will of the Governours of the Church. And the ſame hath been the judgment of Antiquity in the like caſe. The ancient and orthodox Fathers of the Church, being met together in Council at *Antioch*, in the firſt year of the Reign of *Aurelianus* the Emperour, and in the year of Chriſt (according to *Euſebius*) 269. decreed ‖ *Non licere Epiſcopo vel Clerico ſi exauthorizatus fuerit miniſtrare*; "That if any Biſhop, being "condemned by a Council, or any "Presbyter or Deacon by his Biſhop, "ſhould preſume to Preach, or med-"dle with any thing of, or belonging "to the Sacred Office of the Miniſtry, "there ſhould never be any hope for "him, ever to be reſtored again by any "other Council or Synod: And all "that

‖ *Concil.* Antioch. *Can.* 4.

" that Communicated with him, ſhould " be caſt out of the Church. As may be ſeen more at large in that Canon.

Of the like judgment were the Divines of the *Presbyterian*-way touching thoſe learned, Godly, and orthodox Miniſters, who ſuffered ejection out of their livings, and deprivation of all they had, in the late times of troubles, by a *pretended* authority of *Parliament*, for their adherence to his late Majeſty of ever Bleſſed memory. When the Earl of *Northumberland* diſcourſing with Mr *Calamy* about the ſupplying of above fifty Churches in *London*, void of Miniſters, told him, That they muſt reſtore ſome of the ſequeſtred Clergy of *London*, and admit them to preach again, for unleſs they did ſo, the *Parliament* could not find men of ability to preach in *London*: Mr *Calamy* replied, *God Forbid*. As it is recorded and publiſhed to the world, in a Book called *Perſecutio undecima*, Printed in the year 1648. *page* 42. And if the thought of the Reſtauration of thoſe worthies to their Office, how unjuſtly ſoever they were ſuſpended from it, was (in the judgment of that perſon) rejected with in-

indignation, as a thing offenſive and either forbidden, or wiſhed to be forbidden of God; how much more execrable and abominable a thing would he have thought it to be, if they ſhould have taken upon them (as ſome now do under a *lawfull power*) to preach again, without any readmiſſion by that power that ſilenced them, yea in oppoſition and defiance of it?

And becauſe no teſtimony is ſo fit to convince any party as that which proceeds from *their own Mouths*; Let therefore the Judgment of a * *Non-conformiſt* (otherwiſe a Perſon in Learning, Sobriety and Solidity inferiour to few of his generation,) be heard and weighed in this caſe. He writes in defence of our Church aſſemblies, againſt thoſe who being ſilenced for Non-conformity, (as he was) yet (not as he did) ſeparated themſelves from the publick Congregations; and not enduring to have their Mouths ſtopped, or to ſit down in ſilence, thought themſelves bound (according to the Example of the Apoſtles, *Act.* 4. 19. and 5. 29.) to exerciſe their Miniſtry, though not in publick, yet in private Meetings, notwith-

* *Mr.* William Bradſhaw *unreaſonableneſs of ſeparation. pag.* 90, &c.

withſtanding any Legal prohibition to the contrary.

Firſt he diſtinguiſheth betwixt the calling of the Apoſtles, and that of the Miniſters now. The former, as they had their miniſtry immediately from God, ſo had they the deſignation of that miniſtry to their perſons immediately from God alſo. And therefore the exerciſe of it was not reſtrainable, or to be forborn at the Commandment of men. The latter, though their miniſtry be from God alſo, yet have their Calling to that miniſtry or the deſignation of that office to ſuch and ſuch particular perſons, from men in God's ordinary way, and cannot exerciſe that function, but by virtue of that Calling wch they have from men. „ And there-
" fore (ſaith he) in common ſenſe they
" ought to obey man, forbidding them
" the exerciſe of a Calling, which they
" do exerciſe by virtue of a Calling from
" men. Otherwiſe there ſhould be no
" power ſo to depoſe a man from his
" Miniſtry, but that notwithſtanding
" any Command from the Church or
" State, he is ſtill to continue in the ex-
" erciſe of his miniſtry, and ſhould be
" bound

" bound to give that example, which
" the Apoſtles did, which is not onely
" abſurd, but a conceit tending plain-
" ly to manifeſt Sedition and Schiſm.

Afterwards he hath theſe words.

" Neither were ſome of the Apoſtles
" onely forbidden, ſo as that others
" ſhould be ſuffered to preach the ſame
" Goſpel in their places; but the utter
" abolition of the Chriſtian Religion was
" manifeſtly intended, in ſilencing them.
" But our Churches, whereof we are
" Miniſters, are no private and ſecret
" Aſſemblies, ſuch as hide themſelves
" from the face of a perſecuting Ma-
" giſtrate; but are publick, profeſſing
" their worſhip, and doing their Relig-
" on in the face of the Magiſtrate and
" State; yea and by his Countenance,
" Authority and Protection: And we
" are ſet over thoſe Churches, not onely
" by a calling of our People, but alſo
" by Authority from the Magiſtrate,
" who hath an armed power, to hin-
" der ſuch publick actions; who is alſo
" willing to permit and maintain other

" true

" true Miniſters of the Goſpel, in thoſe " places where he forbiddeth ſome.

And thereupon the ſaid Authour makes this threefold Concluſion.

1. " If after our publick Calling to " miniſter in ſuch a known and publick " Church, not by the Church onely, " but by the Magiſtrate alſo; the Ma- " giſtrate ſhall have matter againſt us " (juſt, or unjuſt, as to our obedience " it matters not) and ſhall in that re- " gard forbid us to miniſter to our " Church, I ſee not by what warrant " in God's word, we ſhould think our " ſelves bound notwithſtanding, to ex- " erciſe our Miniſtry ſtill; except we " ſhould think ſuch a Law of Miniſtry " to lie upon us, that we ſhould be " bound to run upon the Swords point " of the Magiſtrate, or oppoſe Sword " to Sword, which I am ſure Chriſtia- " nity abominates.

2. " Yea, ſuppoſe the Magiſtrate " ſhould doe it unjuſtly and againſt the " Will of the Church, and ſhould there- " in ſin; yet doth not the Church in " that regard ceaſe to be a Church, nor

" ought ſhe therein reſiſt the Will of the " Magiſtrate; nor doth ſhe ſtand bound " in regard of her affection to her Mi- " niſter (how great and deſerved ſo- " ever) to deprive her ſelf of the pro- " tection of the Magiſtrate, by leaving " her publick ſtanding, to follow her " Miniſter in private, and in the dark; " refuſing the benefit of other publick " Miniſters, which with the good leave " and liking of the Magiſtrate, ſhe may " enjoy.

3. " Neither do I know, what War- " rant any ordinary Miniſter hath by " God's word, in ſuch a caſe, ſo to draw " any ſuch Church or People to his " private Miniſtry, that thereby they " ſhould hazard their outward Eſtate " and quiet in the Common-wealth, " where they live; when in ſome com- " petent meaſure, they may publickly, " with the grace and favour of the Ma- " giſtrate, enjoy the ordinary means of " ſalvation by another. And except he " hath a Calling to miniſter in ſome " other Church, he is to be content to " live as a private member untill it ſhall " pleaſe God, to reconcile the Magi- " ſtrate unto him, and to call him again " to his own Church.

From

From which words of this learned *Non-conformiſt*, it may eaſily be gathered, that thoſe perſons who are now, by the unqueſtionable Legitimate power of the Kingdom, for their Non-compliance with the preſent legal Eſtabliſhment in the Church, depoſed from their Miniſtry, if they contain not themſelves in quietneſs and ſilence, as other private Chriſtians do, and ought; but will without a Call of Authority, undertake ſtill to preach the word, and draw People after them to their private Miniſtry; they are condemned by the moſt ſober, and judicious of their own party; and the caſe of them and their followers, is adjudged to be far different from that of the Apoſtles, and primitive Chriſtians; their practice unwarrantable by the word of God, and manifeſtly tending to Sedition and Schiſm.

Firmum eſt genus probationis quod etiam ex adverſario ſumitur, & veritas etiam ab inimicis veritatis probetur. Novatian. *de Trin.*

Amici contra amicum; & inimici pro inimico invincibile teſtimonium eſt. L. Vives *de inſtrument. probabilit.*

But what ſpeak I of the ſingle Teſtimony and Judgment of one man of that way and perſwaſion (though a learned and judicious one) whenas we have extant to the World the like verdict *agreed upon long ſince by the joint conſent of ſundry Godly and learned Miniſters*

of this Kingdom, then ſtanding out and ſuffering in the cauſe of inconformity, and publiſhed by Mr. William Rathband *for the good of the Church, and the better ſetling of mens unſtable minds in the truth, againſt the ſubtile inſinuations and plauſible pretences of that pernicious evil of the Browniſts or Separatiſts.* For in the 4th. page of that Book; Firſt, they juſtifie themſelves againſt the objection of that faction, in yeilding to the ſuſpenſions and deprivations of the Biſhops, acknowledging their Power to depoſe, who did ordain them; and their own duty to acquieſce therein, and in quietneſs and ſilence to ſubject themſelves thereunto, in expreſſions ſo full to my preſent purpoſe that I ſhould have tranſcribed them for the Reader's ſatisfaction, were it ſo that I had not been prevented by the reverend and worthy Authour of the * *Continuation of the Friendly Debate.* As to that place of Scripture. *Act.* 4. 19. 20. which they acknowledge to be very *unskilfully alledged* by the adverſary, they make this threefold anſwer, to ſhew the difference betwixt the Apoſtles caſe and theirs.

* *Pag.* 345. vide *the laſt page of this Treatiſe.* 156. *where the words are to be ſeen.*

" Firſt

"First (they say) they that inhi-
"bited the Apostles were known and
"professed Enemies of the Gospel.

"Secondly, the Apostles were char-
"ged not to teach *in the Name of Christ,*
"*nor to publish any part of the Doctrine*
"*of the Gospel*; which Commandment
"might more hardly be yeilded unto,
"than this of our Bishops, who are not
"onely content that the Gospel should
"be preached, but are also preachers
"of it themselves.

"Thirdly, the Apostles received not
"their Calling and Authority from
"† men, nor by the hands of men, but † Gal. 1. 1.
"immediately from God himself, and
"therefore also might not be restrained
"nor deposed by men; whereas we,
"though we exercise a function, where-
"of God is the Authour, and we are
"also called of God to it, yet are we
"also called and ordained by the hands
"and ministry of men, and may there-
"fore by men be also deposed and re-
"strained from the exercise of our Mi-
"nistry.

I cannot think that any of the Learned sort of the Non-conformists now are ignorant of these things, nor, that (if

their hearts were known) their Judgments differ (in this case) from that of their ancient brethren ; but I fear the busie upholders and promoters of Conventicles in our Age, notwithstanding their prohibition by Law, to preach at all, sin against their own light and conscience in so doing. But I proceed.

4. Now Laws being thus made against all such unlawfull Meetings, and all such His Majestie's Laws being no way contrary to God's word ; all his Subjects stand bound in the obligation of obedience to them, and that *for conscience sake* (*Rom.* 13. 5. 1 *Pet.* 2. 13. *Tit.* 3. 1.) And under pain of *Damnation* if they wilfully resist and disobey, *Rom.* 13. 2. And therefore it is, that in the Schools, they call disobedience to the King's Laws, *Sacrilege*: for though the trespass seem to be directed but against a man, yet in that man whose Office (and consequently his person) is sacred, God is opposed, and his ordinance violated. The King's Laws though in themselves, in regard of their particular Constitution, they put no special obligation upon us under pein of sin and damnation ; yet in a general relati-

on

on to that God, who is the original of all Power, and hath commanded us to obey Authority, their neglect or disobedience involves us in guilt, and exposeth us to *Sin*, and consequently to *Damnation.* || *Civilibus legibus quæ cum pietate non pugnant, eo quisque Christianus paret promptius, quo fide Christi est imbutus plenius*; Every Christian, by how much the more he hath of the grace of faith, by so much the more ready he is to conform to the Laws of men, which are not contrary to the Laws of God. All power is of God; That therefore which Authority enjoins us, God enjoins us by it, the Command is mediately his, though passing through the hands of men. * *Hoc jubent imperatores, quod jubet & Christus; quia cum bonum jubent, per illos non nisi Christus jubet*; When Kings command what is not disagreeable with Christ's Commands, Christ commands by them, and we are called to obey not onely them, but Christ in them.

|| *Confess.* Suev. *cap.* 14.

* Aug.

But is not suffering obedience? And if men are willing to submit to the Penalty of the Law, is not that sufficient to discharge the Conscience from the guilt of disobedience? *Object.*

Anſ. Caſuiſts, that are of that Judgment, ſay, it holds true onely in thoſe Laws (whereof there are but very few in the World) that are *purely penal*: And the Laws which we now ſpeak of are not ſuch, for theſe are partly *Moral*, binding to doe, or to leave undone ſome moral Act; and partly *Penal*, in caſe of Omiſſion of what the Laws command, or Commiſſion of what the Laws forbid, then to undergoe the Puniſhment the Laws inflict. Now in theſe mixt Laws, ſuffering the Penalty doth not diſcharge the Conſcience from the guilt of ſin: For it is a rule of ſure truth which Caſuiſts give in ſuch caſes, *Omnis præceptio obligat ad culpam*; Every juſt Command of thoſe who have lawfull Authority to command, leaves a guilt of ſin upon thoſe mens Conſciences who do not obey. The reaſon is, becauſe where a Law made by lawfull Authority requires active obedience, and impoſeth a Penalty in caſe of diſobedience, the Conſcience of the ſubject ſtands bound primarily and intentionally to the performance of the duty therein enjoined. As for the Penalty threatned, that is a ſecondary and accidental thing

Sanderſon *de obligat. Conſc.* p. 304. &c.

to

to the Law, added to keep up the reputation and eſteem thereof, in the minds of thoſe who are concerned in it, and to affright them from the neglect and diſobedience of it. So that, though the ſuffering the Penalty of the Law, in caſe of the tranſgreſſion of it, be as much as can be required of the Law-giver, yet God, *by whom Kings reign*, and who requires ſubjection to Authority, and that for *Conſcience ſake*, will *not hold* ſuch perſons *guiltleſs*, that doe not the things commanded in the Law.

The malefactour ſatisfies the Law at the time of his execution, but who will ſay, that without repentance of his fact, the guilt of ſin remains not ſtill upon his Conſcience, or that he ſhall be acquitted at God's tribunal?

5. Neither are they the Laws of the Church and Kingdom of *England* onely, that are againſt ſuch Meetings and Miniſtry as are in queſtion; But the godly Kings and Princes of the primitive Chriſtian Church have ever made the like. † *Euſebius* tells us, that *Conſtantine* the Great made a Law, that no Separatiſts or Schiſmaticks ſhould meet in

† Euſeb. *de vit.* Conſtant. L. 3. c. 63.

in Conventicles; and commanded that all such places, where they were wont to keep their Meetings, should be demolished; and that they should not keep their factious Meetings either in publick places, or private houses, or remote places, but that they should repair to their parochial Churches. And in the next Chapter he saith, that by that Law, the memory of most of those Sectaries was forgotten and extinguished.

‖ Sozom. L. 7. c. 12.

Sozomen reports ‖ that *Theodosius* the great, decreed that the Sectaries (whose petition for liberty he had first torn in pieces) should not assemble together, but all of them repair to their own publick Congregations, otherwise to be banished their Country, to be branded with some infamy, and not to be partakers of Common privileges and favours with others. And our neighbours and brethren of *Scotland* of the *Presbyterian* judgment, did in one of their late general Assemblies, since the enacting of their *solemn League and Covenant*, make a special Canon *against all private Meetings*; the direct tendency thereof being to the overthrow

of

of that Uniformity by them covenanted, to be endeavoured in all the Churches of the three Kingdoms.

The very *Heathens* themselves, by their Laws have made all such Assemblies illegitimate which the highest Authority did not cause to meet, though they were ἱερῶν ὀργίων ἕνεκα, to doe solemn Sacrifice to their Gods (as may appear by *Solon*'s Laws) and in their practice, they have shewed themselves ready to yeild obedience to their Governours, in desisting from such irregular Conventions when they have been required.

Though *Demetrius* his Assembly came together disorderly, and of their own heads **rushed into the Theatre*, and there kept a shouting and *Crying* two hours together, *some one thing, some another, not knowing, most of them, wherefore they came together*: Yet when the *Town-clark* (who had Authority) did dismiss them; they added not one fault to another, but broke off their disorderly Meeting presently. And they shew themselves more refractary than *Demetrius* himself, who doe otherwise.

* Act. 19. 29.

And, if it be well considered, the practice

practice in queſtion will be found to interfere with it ſelf; and to carry in the very face of it a convincing Teſtimony of its evil and unwarrantableneſs. For if it be lawfull for theſe men to preach in private Meetings (as they do, and have a long time done) why do they not take upon them to adventure to preach in the publick and Church-aſſemblies alſo? What is it that makes them abſtain from the latter, and yet take liberty in the former?

Is it in obedience to the Law of the Land, which forbids them to preach in publick? The ſame Law forbids them to preach in private alſo. It cannot be denied but that one is forbidden as well as the other. Then this muſt needs be turned upon them, why do they not obey in the one as well as in the other, ſince they cannot but acknowledge that both are forbidden in the ſame Law? ſurely if it were the Care and Conſcience, and deſire to obey lawfull Authority, according as Chriſtian duty binds them, that makes them ſilent in publick; the ſame Conſcience, the ſame care and deſire would make them ſit down in ſilence in private alſo.

If

If it be ſaid, that they therefore abſtain from publick preaching, becauſe it more expoſeth them to the danger and penalty of the Law, than private doth: Then this muſt be retorted upon them alſo, that their obedience is not ſuch as God requireth, *for Conſcience*, but *for wrath*. Good men obey for *Conſcience*; but thoſe that obey for *wrath*, have not the fear of God before their Eyes. For, none contemns the power of man, unleſs he hath firſt deſpiſed the Power of God.

And ſhall that be accounted by any ſober Chriſtian, to be the ordinance of God, or means of his appointment to beget grace in mens ſouls, that is ſo repugnant to good Laws, both of Church and State, which we all ſtand bound in *Conſcience* to obſerve and obey; is contradictory to it ſelf, and hath in it that, which proclaims to all that will open their Eyes to look into it, its unlawfulneſs and ſin? God forbid.

ARGUMENT II.

THAT cannot be the ordinance of God, or means of grace, that is contrary to that order which God himself by his word hath eſtabliſhed in his Church. For God is not the Authour of diſorder and confuſion; But the Devil. In the Church God's Command is for order in all things: † *Let all things be done decently and in order.* And St. *Paul* did as well rejoice to ſee ‖ *the order* as the *faith* of the Church of *Coloſs.* Onely * *Death* and *Hell* have no *order.* And it is a kind of death to a godly Chriſtian to ſee diſorder in the Church of Chriſt, and his Service. For what is a Church without order, but a kind of an Hell above ground? Where order is wanting, what is a Kingdom but a *Chaos* of Confuſion? Yea,

† 1 Cor. 14. 33. 40.

‖ Coll. 2. 5.

* Job. 10. 21, 22.

But ſuch a Miniſtry, and ſuch Meetings and Aſſemblies as are in queſtion, are contrary to the order God hath in his word eſtabliſhed in his Church. For the order God hath ſet in his Church is, that his People ſhould be diſtinguiſhed into flocks, and that every flock ſhould

ſhould have its own ſhepherd. *It is God's ordinance* (ſaith Mr. Hilderſham) *as it is agreeable to good order, that Chriſtians ſhould be ſorted into Congregations, according to their dwellings, that they who dwell next together, ſhould be of the ſame Congregation, and from thence the name παροικία, a pariſh, firſt came.* As it is againſt all reaſon and ſcripture, that a people ſcattered about, ſome here, and ſome there, in ſeveral parts of the Country, ſhould voluntarily aſſociate and combine themſelves in a diſtinct body, under what Miniſtry they pleaſe, and that beſt ſuits with their humour, and call themſelves a Church, as the manner of ſome is: So it is agreeable with the very light of nature, and dictates of right reaſon, that a people in a vicinity and neighbourhood dwelling together, ought to join together with thoſe of that neighbourhood, according as moſt conveniently they may, for the worſhip and ſervice of God. We reade of the Church of God at *Rome, Corinth, Galatia, Epheſus*, &c. And ‖ of *ſeven Epiſtles written from Heaven to ſeven ſeveral Churches, all which had their abode at the places whence the Churches bare their Names,*

Hild. *on* Joh. 4. p. 242.

‖ Blake *de fœd.* p. 225.

Names, these are scripture Churches; saith a Presbyterian.

It is the ordinance of God that every Flock or Congregation should have their own pastour, * *Take heed to the flock over whom the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers. Timothy* appointed *Titus* † *to ordain Elders in every City. i.e.* wheresoever there was a body of people for a fit Congregation, there must be a Pastour or Elder placed. Whence it appears that even in the Apostles days there was a distinction of Churches, and Congregations; for the Elders had their flocks over whom the Holy Ghost made them Overseers. The like is said of *Paul* and *Barnabas* ‖ *that they ordained Elders in every Church.* Hence (saith *Calvin*) * may be gathered the difference betwixt the office of those Elders, and that of the Apostles. These had no certain station in the Church, but still went up and down, hither and thither, to plant new Churches, *Rom.* 15. 19. 20. 23. 24. 1 *Cor.* 4. 17. *Act.* 1. 8. *Rom.* 1. 14. 2 *Tim.* 1. 11. 2 *Cor.* 10. 14. 16. But the other were by God's appointment fixed and tyed to their own proper Congregations and Flocks, *Act.* 14. 23. *Act.* 20. 28. *Tit.* 1. 5.

* Act. 20. 28.

† Tit. 1. 5.

‖ Act. 14. 23.

*Calvin *in loc.*

Tit. 1. 5. 1 *Pet.* 5. 1. The diminutive ποίμνιον, used in *Luc.* 12. 32. *Act.* 20. 28. 1 *Pet.* 5. 2. 3. Not ποιμνὴ, † doth intimate as much; for, *parvum gregem significat*, it signifies a small part of the great flock distinguished from the rest. † Jansen. *in concord. evang.*

And indeed the state and condition of the Ministers and Ministry of the Church requires, that every Pastour should not take care of all the Flock or Church, but that rather they should have certain portions or Congregations of God's People, committed to them particularly, amongst whom they should bestow their care and pains. For this cause St. *Paul* took course to send certain Ministers to certain particular Churches: as ‖ *Crescens* to *Galatia*, *Titus* to *Dalmatia*, and *Tychicus* to *Ephesus*. *Unde rectissime colligimus* (saith a * Learned Casuist) *auditores ordinariis pastoribus contentos esse oportere, ne eos in crimen ἀλλοτριεπισκοπῆς conjiciant.* ‖ 2 Tim. 4. 10. 12. * Baldwin.

So 'tis God's ordinance that Flocks & Congregations should be contented with, and depend on their own Pastours. This appears by that charge of the Apostle. † *We beseech you brethren to know them* (to own and acknowledge them) *that* † 1 Thess. 5. 12, 15.

 labour

labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem them very highly in love for their

‖ Heb. 13. 7. *works sake.* ‖ Again, *remember them that have the rule over you, which have spoken to you the word of God.* And again

* Heb. 13. 17. * *obey them that have the rule over you, and submit your selves; for they watch for your Souls, as they that must give an account, that they may doe it with joy and not with grief.* In both places the Command of God is for Obedience to Pastours; not any, such as people themselves according to their own humours shall chuse; but it is ἡγουμένων ὑμῶν in the seventh verse: and τοῖς ἡγουμένοις ὑμῶν in the 17th verse. In both places *YOUR RULERS*, such as are lawfully set over you by those that are in Authority in the Church. And even as St. *Paul* commends *Epaphroditus* to the *Philippians* as their ordinary Pastour,

† Phil. 2. 29. and commands them † *to receive him in the Lord with all gladness, and to hold such in repatation.* So, he doth the like to other Churches, commanding them to honour and obey their own Pastours; which he would never have done, if it had been lawfull for people

with

with neglect of their own Miniſters, to follow whom they pleaſe.

People are much miſtaken, if they think, they are ſo much at their own diſpoſal, as that they may put themſelves under the teaching and care of what Miniſter they have a mind to, though never ſo excellent and orthodox. For,

1. Firſt, God is not ſo careleſs of the precious Souls of his People in his Church, as to leave them at random to ſhift for themſelves, every one according to his own fooliſh fancy; but doth diſpoſe of them himſelf by his good providence, by the hand of thoſe, who from and under him have Authority ſo to doe, to the care and charge of Paſtours of his own appointment, the reſpective Miniſters of thoſe Pariſhes and places where they, with other of his People, do cohabite. And therefore the form of our inſtitutions to our ſeveral charges, runs in theſe words, *Curam & regimen omnium animarum parochianorum tibi plenarie in Domino committimus.* The definition that our Saviour Chriſt gives of a Church, is, *a* || *Shepherd and his Sheep that will hear his voice. A* || John. 10.

lawfull Minister, and a Flock or Congregation lawfully committed to his charge make up a true Church. Hereunto accord the Judgment of the Fathers. St. *Chrysostome* in an homily *de recipiendo Severiano*, begins thus; *Sicuti capiti Corpus cohærere necessarium est, ita Ecclesiam Sacerdoti, & Principi Populum.* As it is necessary that the body cleave to the head, so it is likewise of necessity that the Congregation cleave to the Priest, and the People to their Prince. To which the saying of St. *Cyprian* agrees. *Illi sunt Ecclesia, plebs sacerdoti adunita, & pastori suo grex adhærens.* The Church is a Congregation of believers united to their Minister, and a flock adhering to their Shepherd. For people then to imagine that they are at their own liberty to forsake their own Ministers, and to wander whither they please, is a Principle that tends directly to the destruction of the Church, and is contrary to the very nature and being of it. Should the Flocks of these wanderers doe as their Masters doe, leave and run away from their shepherds, and goe whither they please, and feed where they please, their owners would

Chrysost.

Cyprian *Epist.* 69.

would expect to ſee but little good come of them.

2. Secondly, a manifeſt injury will thereby be done to their own Paſtours, be they never ſo vigilant, to be forſaken of their own People, as if they were deficient in the diſcharge of their duties and offices amongſt them. For, if it be lawfull for one to doe ſo, then 'tis lawfull for ten, and if for ten, then for an hundred, and ſo conſequently for all; and ſo a Paſtour may be forſaken of all his People; which how contrary it is to the order and rules of the Goſpel, I leave to any perſon of ſober and ſtaid Principles to judge.

3. Thirdly, It will be matter of offence to others (who are prone to live * by example more than by rule) and an occaſion to them to doe the like: and ſo by this means all that obedience and duty, that by divine Precept, is due to a Miniſter from his People, would ſoon periſh and come to nothing.

* *Grex totus in agris unius ſcabie cadit.* Juv.

4. Fourthly, An univerſal liberty of ſinning without controll or reſtraint would by this means be introduced amongſt People. For if they may have liberty to wander from one Miniſter to

another, at their pleaſure, they will have none at laſt, to have the cure and care of their ſouls: neither will any one dare faithfully and freely to rebuke them for any thing they doe amiſs, for fear leſt they ſhould forſake him alſo, and ſtill be ſeeking out to ſome other. And this is a moſt curſed condition by the verdict of † God himſelf, for People to be without a particular Paſtour of their own; as *ſheep without a ſhepherd*, wandring now here now there, expoſed to Dogs and Wolves, Seducers and Deceivers.

† Pſ. 119.176. Jer. 5. 6. 7. 17. Zach. 10. 11. —— 11. 10. 15. —— 13. 7. Mat. 9. 36.

5. Fifthly, It is a ſinning againſt and croſſing divine Providence, and carries much of impiety and unchriſtian Ingratitude in it: God's gracious promiſe to his People is ‖ *I will give you Paſtours according to mine own heart, which ſhall feed you with Knowledge and Underſtanding.* Now when God ſhall be graciouſly pleaſed, to make good this promiſe to a People, and they (therewithall not contented) ſhall out of a vain Curioſity, light and needleſs affectation of Novelty, (for as the caſe in queſtion ſtands, it can proceed from no other Cauſe) flock after Strangers and Uſurpers,

‖ Jer. 3. 15.

pers, even to a forſaking, either in whole, or in part, their own faithfull Paſtour, it is juſt with God to blaſt all ſuch Miniſtry, and to make all their pretended preaching, become but * a *reaſoning with unprofitable talk, with Speeches wherewith they can doe no good:* And to withdraw his bleſſing from ſuch unthankfull Peoples attendance on it, ſo as that † *hearing they ſhall hear and not underſtand, and ſeeing they ſhall ſee and not perceive.* And as God threatned the Jews in the like caſe ‖ ſo may he juſtly puniſh ſuch ungratefull Male-Contents, with a certain and efficacious permiſſion of them to be deceived, led into, and hardned in all kind of damnable Errours, by their pretended teachers. And ſo, what *Gaſtius* obſerves of the *Anabaptiſts*, may be made true of all ſuch humouriſts, ‖ *Quia à veritate avertunt aures, ideo Deus permittit illis doctores, non qui lingua medica ſanarent ulcera ipſorum, ſed qui pruritum ac ſcabiem affectuum ipſorum commode ſcalperent.* Becauſe they turn away their Ears from the truth, therefore God ſends them teachers after their own Luſts, not ſuch as ſhould with wholſome tongues heal

* Job. 15. 3.

† Mat. 13. 14.

‖ Ezek. 14. 7. —— 9.

‖ Gaſtius *de Exord. Anabapt. p.* 495.

their ſores, but with their nails ſcratch the itch of their luſts and affections. They may chance to gain ſome empty notions, τῆς ψευδωνύμου γνώσεως, *of ſcience*
* 1 Tim. 6. 20. *falſely* * *ſo called*, but nothing of ſanctified or ſaving knowledge.

And if a man look with an impartial Eye, on the practices of theſe perſons, that tranſplant themſelves out of the Garden of God's Church, into the waſte of theſe unlawfull Aſſemblies, he may ſoon diſcern the viſible tokens of divine diſpleaſure upon them and their ways. Such barrenneſs of true Holineſs and Chriſtian-charity, ſuch wilfull hardning in ways of Schiſm, pride & prophaneneſs (I ſpeak within the compaſs of mine own ſad obſervation and experience, not with any deſire to blazon the Crimes of any, but to declare my heart-breaking ſorrow for them) as if that curſe pronounced by our Bleſſed Saviour againſt the fruitleſs Figtree in the Goſ-
‡ Mat. 21. 19. pel, were executed on them, † *Let no good fruit grow on thee henceforth for ever.* Their faith ſeems to be mere faction; all their Religion but a profeſſed diſobedience to their Superiours, and a ſtudied oppoſition to the truth of that which

which (through the Mercy of God) is eſtabliſhed in our Church: their holineſs, to be always finding of faults; and, *ſtulto zelo pleni* (as ſaith *Melanchon*) being filled with fooliſh zeal, they will like nothing but their own inventions. As ſoon as ever they fanſie themſelves to be converted, they can teach their King how to govern, and their Miniſters how to preach. They can tell what Laws are fit for the Kingdom, and what Orders for the Church; yea, they are preſently ſo illuminated, that they can ſee every blemiſh in both, when in themſelves, their companions and families, they cannot ſee beams and intolerable Evils. Eagle-eyed abroad to ſpie faults in others, and look into things that concern them not, but as blind as Beetles at home. Like flies, ‖ they will faſten no where, but on the gall or ſore (if there be any) in Church or State. ‖ *Hiſt. animal. p.* 384.

And whereas Chriſt in his Goſpel hath commanded us, that * *each ſhould eſteem other better than themſelves*; eſpecially where nothing appears notorious in mens lives to the contrary; theſe men will be peremptory and *Pope*-like * Phil. 2. 3.

in

in their definitions, on all that are not of their way and practice, counting and calling them, *Carnal*, the *men of the world*, *the wicked*, &c. and engroſs to themſelves the Names of *Saints*, the *Godly*, God's children and people, with exclusion of all elſe that are not of their practice and opinions, from having *part* or *lot* in *that buſineſs* or privilege. It is holineſs enough for any, to be one of them.

The Character which the ancient *Nonconformiſts* give of the Separatiſts of their times, doth as exactly fit theſe of ours, as if it had been made of purpoſe for them.

† *Grave and modeſt Confutat. publiſhed by Mr.* Rathband *p.* 61. 62.

"It is † evident (ſay they) their "zeal hath been like the raſh and indiſ- "creet zeal ſpoken of and reproved in "the Sons of *Zebedeus*. And favou- "reth altogether of Uncharitableneſs "and not of Love: for as all they that "have once declined to that Schiſm, "are found to be exceeding proud and "diſdainfull towards all that are con- "trary minded; yea even ſuch as (be- "fore they were infected with that "Leaven) were patterns of all Love, "Modeſty and Humility unto others;

"ſo

"so will they not acknowledge nor re-
"verence any of the most excellent gra-
"ces that God hath given to any of his
"Servants amongst us, nor so much
"respect them as *Papists* will do. No,
"they profess greater detestation and
"despite to the most godly and most
"sincere men amongst us, than they do
"to such as are most notorious in pro-
"faneness and malice to the truth. And
for shameless lying, spitefull railing, and
scurrilous and Ruffian-like profaneness
which they observe and describe at
large in them, I have not found that
these come any whit short, but rather
(I fear) overpass the deeds of their
Predecessours. So that I find that note
of St. *Augustine* to be most true, which
he observes out of the Parable ‖ con-
cerning the man that fell among
Thieves. 'Tis said of him that he *went
down from Jerusalem to Jericho. Jerusa-
lem* was the Church of God, the * *ho-
ly City*. There was the Temple, and
publick place of the worship of the God
of *Israel*. *Jericho*, a type of the world,
unkind to † *God's spies*, as the world
is to his Ministers; where God had no
publick worship at all. Betwixt it and

‖ Luc. 10. 30.

* Ps. 87. 1, 2, 3, Ps. 128. 5.

† Josh. 2.

Jeru-

Jeruſalem, there was a Deſart, infamous for frequent Robberies and Murthers there committed: in which reſpect it was called *ADOMIM*, for the ſtore of Bloud there ſhed. There was King *Ze-*
‖ 2 King. 25.5. *dekiah* taken ‖ by the Army of the *Chaldeans*, when he fled from *Jeruſalem*. And thither the man bended his courſe. Whereupon St. *Auguſtine* notes, *ſi non deſcendiſſet, in latrones non incidiſſet*, had he not gone down from God and his Church, he had not faln into the hands of Thieves: ſo long as he had kept himſelf in God's way, he would have kept him from all harm and danger: But if he will goe from the Church, let him go whither elſe he pleaſe, God will give him over into the hands of Thieves, who ſhall *ſtrip him, wound him*, and *leave him half dead*. Our Church-forſakers in theſe days have ſped no better than that man did then, but ſince they left our *Jeruſalem*, the place of God's publick worſhip, they have faln into the hands of Thieves, that great and old Cheater, the Devil and his Inſtruments, the Seducers of our times, who *craftily lye in wait to deceive*: And theſe have ſtript them of their *Raiment*,

all

all that external appearance of Peace, Charity, Modeſty and Humility, that formerly they ſeemed to be clothed withall, and have not left them ſo much as one ragg remaining to hide their Nakedneſs: *wounded* them in their *minds* and *judgments* with errours and falſhoods; in their *Conſciences* with Superſtition and vain devotion; in their *affections* with utter averſneſs and croſneſs to all that is orderly and impoſed by Authority; inſomuch that they are left *half dead*; ſome life remains in them; to any thing that is evil and forbidden, they are quick and active, but to any thing that is truly good and enjoined, as dead as a ſtock: * *wiſe to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge.* Such is God's Juſtice and Severity on thoſe that leave *Jeruſalem* for *Jericho.* * Jer. 4. 22.

In a word; if all of this ſort of People throughout the Nation, be as thoſe with whom I have to doe, (and I know there is the ſame corruption in the Natures of all, though there may not be the ſame eruption in all) God and Godlineſs have not greater enemies, nor the Devil greater inſtruments to advance his Kingdom, in the introduction of

Atheiſm

Atheism and *Prophaneness* than themselves. God's publick worship and worshippers are matter of their loathing and scorn, and if ever any of them afford their presence to any part of it, it is of purpose either to quarrel at or deride it. And as he whom they serve *goes about like a roaring Lion seeking whom he may devour*, so do they make it their business to beget prejudice in the hearts of all with whom they converse, against their own Ministers and Ministry, and to make Proselytes to themselves and their party, of the worst and easiest sort of People. The pretext of Piety and Conscience is both the *Veil* wherewith they hide their unparallelled Pride, Malice and Hypocrisie; and their *Bait* wherewith they catch simple Souls in their Net. † As at the building of the Temple under *Zerubbabel*, the adversaries making shew of helping forward the work by setting their hands to it, pretending they sought the same God the Jews did, proved themselves to be the greatest Enemies to God's People, and hinderers of the building by their coloured Friendship; so I know not any whose courses are more

† Ezra 4. 1,2.

more to the disturbance of the peace, and prejudice to the inlargement of the Church, and furtherance of Religion, than these men that would be noted for a *Form of Godliness, but indeed deny the Power of it.*

I heartily wish, that in their lives they would henceforth stoutly confute this Character I have given of them, which yet comes far short of what by wofull experience I have found in them: And when I see it done, I shall as gladly retract what I have written, as with sorrow of heart I have uttered it. In the mean time I return from what I have digressed.

If a greater excellency of gifts and parts in one Minister above another, be pretended, as a cause of their wandring; they forget what St. *Paul* wrote to the *Corinthians*, when there grew Schisms and Divisions amongst them, upon the account of the diversity of gifts which they observed in their Teachers. ‖ *I am of Paul* (saith one) his matter is powerfull, his Doctrine sound, his Method plain. *I am of Apollo* (saith another) he is an Eloquent man, mighty in the Scriptures, him I prefer. *I am* ‖ 1 Cor. 1. 12.

of

of Cephas (saith a third) his preaching I most affect. *I am of Christ* (saith a fourth) I care for none of all the former, they are but men, I will therefore have my dependance wholly on Christ, with neglect of the instrument. But what saith St. *Paul* to all this? * *Is Christ divided?* Can he be the head of such divers and disagreeing bodies, being himself but one? Is he divided from his Ministers, so as not to work by his Spirit, in the hearts of his People, with his word preached by one, as well as by another? Can ye allow of one self same Gospel, as Christ's, being uttered by one Man, and loath it being uttered by another? Will ye acknowledge Christ to be the chief Shepherd and Bishop of your Souls, the great Doctour and Prophet of his Church, and yet think that he will not make his word successfull, for the Salvation of those whom he hath ordained to Eternal life, by what Ministry soever he shall appoint? *For who is* † Paul, *and who is* Apollo? *But Ministers by whom ye believe, even as the Lord gave to every man.* They are but the Ministers of Christ, and such as do nothing of themselves;

* V. 13.

† 1 Cor. 3. 5.

ſelves; but God ſo worketh by them as it pleaſeth him. *I* ‖ *will not dare* (ſaith one of them) *to ſpeak of any of thoſe things which Chriſt hath not wrought by me, to make the Gentiles obedient by word or deed.* ‖ Rom. 15. 18.

The Miniſtry is God's ordinance, and depends not upon the worthineſs of him that is employed in it; but it hath its virtue, force and efficacy, from the bleſſing of God and inward operation of his Spirit, which worketh where, and in, and by, whom he will. Chriſt himſelf converted very few, in compariſon of the many converted by his Apoſtles. Thoſe Miniſters whoſe parts are moſt Seraphical, cannot at their pleaſure infuſe grace into their hearers hearts. * *Paul may plant, and an Apollos may water*, but it is *God* that muſt *give the increaſe*. So as that neither the one nor the other, are any thing in themſelves, without God's bleſſing, which the weakneſs of the inſtrument ſhall not hinder, as making moſt for the Honour of the ſupreme Agent to work by it. † *We have this treaſure in Earthen veſſels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of Men.* * 1 Cor. 3. 6. † 2 Cor. 4. 7.

All God's Servants are not alike gifted; some have *five talents*, some *ten*, some but *one*; yet all may be his faithfull Servants, and may have their gifts given them to profit withall. And from any of their gifts, any may learn and profit, if the fault be not their own. Who thrives more in grace than they, who conscionably attend and depend on their own godly Pastours; Who go more empty away with the shell of Religion only, when others have gotten the kernel, but such as love to wander and *heap up to themselves Teachers* of their own chusing? The first sort find the preaching of God's word to prove wholsome food to them; which though it seem course, and to be served in with great simplicity (like *Daniel's* diet * which was but *Pulse* and *Water*) yet because it is God's allowance, allways hath his blessing with it, and makes his Children so to thrive, *that their Countenances do appear fairer, and they are fatter in flesh*, than the other, who though they feed upon Varieties, and (perhaps) more curiously cook'd dishes, yet have Souls that are still thin and lean, and depart from their banquets with-

* Dan. 1. 15.

without any great ſatisfaction, for want of that bleſſing, without which all manner of Varieties prove but wind and vanity. For † *Man lives not by bread onely, but by the word of bleſſing that comes forth of God's mouth.* Neither ſay I this of mine own private opinion, but the brethren of the *Non-conformity* ſay the ſame. *He that keepeth in God's order, under a meaner honeſt Miniſter, is like to be a more humble thriving Chriſtian, than he, that breaks that order under pretence of Edification.* Saith || Mr. *Baxter.*

† Mat. 4. 4.

|| *Chriſtian Concord.* p. 36.

The ancient and godly Fathers of the Church, taking into conſideration this order, that God hath eſtabliſhed amongſt his People, have both in their publick Councils, and private writings, always diſallowed and forbidden the liberty that People are apt to take of their own heads to wander from their own Paſtours, to hear Strangers. In the third Council of *Carthage* (where *Saint Auguſtine* himſelf was preſent) there was this decree made. *Placuit* * *ut a nullo Epiſcopo uſurpentur plebes alienæ, nec aliquis Epiſcoporum ſupergrediatur in Diœceſi ſuum Collegam.* Be it ordained

*Concil 3. Carthag. l. 10.

that no Biſhop uſurp, or have any thing to doe with another's People, or enter into the Dioceſe of his Compartner in office, to meddle or make there. And this Canon extends its obligation to Miniſters of inferiour order, in reference to each others Congregations, as well as to Biſhops in relation to their Dioceſes. For † *Sicut Epiſcopus ſe habet ad Diœceſim ſuam, ſic ſacerdos ad ſuam parochiam*, ſaith *Aquinas*. As it is with a Biſhop, with reſpect to his Dioceſe, ſo 'tis with a Miniſter in reſpect of his Pariſh. *Sine ſpe ſunt* (ſaith ‖ that holy Martyr St. *Cyprian*) *& perditionem maximam de indignatione Dei acquirunt, qui ſchiſma faciunt, & relicto Epiſcopo, alium ſibi foris Pſeudoepiſcopum conſtituunt.* They are without hope, and procure to themſelves the greateſt deſtruction through the juſt indignation of God, who make Schiſms in the Church, and leaving their own Biſhop, appoint and ſet up another, a falſe Biſhop to themſelves. Again * *ſingulis paſtoribus portio gregis eſt aſcripta, quam regat quiſque ac gubernet, rationem ſui actus domino reddat.* To every Paſtour there is a portion of God's People committed,

† Aquin. *ſupple.* 3. *par.* 9. 8. A. 4.

‖ Cyprian. *L.* 1. *Epiſt.* 6.

* Ibid. *L.* 1. *Epiſt.* 3.

mitted, which he ought to Rule and Govern, as one that muſt give an account to God for them. And ſaith the ſame holy man farther, *Oportet eos quibus præſumus, non circumcurſare, nec Epiſcoporum concordiam cohærentem ſua ſubdola & fallaci temeritate collidere.* It behoves thoſe over whom God hath ſet us, not to run about hither & thither, nor by their falſe and crafty temerity, to break the Concord and good Agreement that ought to be amongſt Miniſters.

In the Canon-law it is ordained * *Ut dominicis & feſtis diebus presbyteri, antequam Sacra celebrent, plebem interrogent, ſi alterius parochianus ſit in eccleſia, qui proprio contempto presbytero, ibi velit Sacris intereſſe; ſi inveniatur, ſtatim ab eccleſia abjiciant.* That on Feſtival and Lord's days, the Miniſters, before they beg in Divine Service, ſhall ask the people, if there be any Perſon of another Pariſh in the Church, who neglecting his own Paſtour, deſires to be preſent at divine Worſhip there; and if any ſuch be found, they ſhall forthwith thruſt him out of the Church. And in another plcea

* *In jure Canon. L. 3. decret. Greg. Tit. 29. de paræciis.*

† L. 5. Tit. 38. *de pœnitentiis & remiſſis.*

it is thus decreed. † *Omnis & quilibet confiteatur proprio Sacerdoti: ſiquis autem alieno Sacerdoti voluerit juſta de cauſa confiteri peccata, licentiam prius poſtulet & obtineat a proprio Sacerdote cum aliter ipſe illum non poſſit abſolvere vel ligare.* Let every man confeſs his faults to his own Miniſter: but if any upon *juſt cauſe* deſire to confeſs to another Miniſter, let him firſt ask and obtain Licence ſo to doe, from his own Miniſter, ſeeing otherwiſe no other can abſolve or bind him.

Of the ſame judgment in this caſe, have the reverend Brethren of the *Preſbyterian* perſwaſion declared themſelves to be; not onely in their Sermons to their people (which I have ſometimes heard) but I have ſeen an *Act*, and can produce it, of the aſſembly of *Scotland*, Entitled, An act againſt ſuch as withdraw themſelves from the publick worſhip in their own Congregation. Wherein the ſaid Aſſembly in the zeal of God " For preſerving *or-*
" *der, unity* and *peace* in the *Kirk*, *for*
" *maintaining that reſpect which is due to*
" *the ordinances and Miniſters of Jeſus*
" *Chriſt, for preventing Schiſms, noyſome*
" *errours,*

" *errours, and all unlawfull practices, which*
" *may follow on the peoples withdrawing*
" *themselves from their own Congrega-*
" *tions*, do ordain every member in e-
" very Congregation to keep their own
" *Paroch Kirk*, to *communicate there in* the
" *Word* and *Sacraments*: and if any
" Person or Persons shall hereafter *ab-*
" *sent themselves from their own Congre-*
" *gations*, except in urgent Cases, *made*
" *known to and approved by the Presby-*
" *tery*, the Ministers of these Congrega-
" tions whereto they resort, shall both
" in publick by Preaching, and in pri-
" vate by admonition, shew *their dis-*
" *like of their withdrawing from their*
" *own Minister*, that in so doing they
" may witness to all that hear them
" their due care to *strengthen the hands*
" *of their fellow Labourers in the work of*
" *the Lord, and their detestation of any*
" *thing that may tend to Separation, or*
" *any of the above mentioned Evils*: here-
" by their own flock will be *confirmed*
" *in their stedfastness, and the unstable*
" *Spirits of others will be rectified*. Like
" as the Minister of that Congregation
" from which they do withdraw shall
" labour first by private admonition to

" reclaim them; and if any after pri-
" vate admonition given by their own
" Paſtour do not amend, in that caſe the
" Paſtour ſhall delate the aforeſaid Per-
" ſons to the Seſſion, who ſhall *cite and*
" *cenſure them as Contemners of the come-*
" *ly order of the Kirk.* And if the mat-
" ter be not taken order with there, it
" is to be brought to the Presbytery.
" For better obſerving whereof, the
" Presbyteries at the ſeveral viſitations
" of their Kirks, and provincial Aſſem-
" blies, in their cenſure of the ſeveral
" Presbyteries ſhall enquire hereanent.
" Which enquiry and report ſhall be
" regiſtrate in the provincial Books,
" that their deligence may be ſeen in
" the General Aſſembly.

The contrary courſe here amongſt us of this age, hath been taken notice of by godly Chriſtians beyond the Seas, as our great fault, and contrary to the practice and cuſtome of the reformed Churches of God abroad. *Honorius Reggius*, a learned man, hath taken the pains to gather together out of Mr. *Edwards* his *Gangrene*, and other Authours, no leſs than 180 errours practiſed in *England*, ſince the year of our Lord 1640.

And

And hath divulged them to the whole World, to the great ſhame of our nation, and ſcandal to our Religion; whereof this is the 125*th* errour (||) *Partem Libertatis Chriſtianæ eſſe, non audire proprium Miniſtrum; ſed ubi libeat, & a quo plus Commodi ſperetur.* That it is a part of Chriſtian liberty, for people not to hear their own Miniſters, but to attend that Miniſtry which they like beſt, and from whom they hope to receive the moſt profit.

|| Honor. Reg. *de ſtatu Eccleſ. in Anglia. p.* 95.

I never heard or read that this diſorderly practice was tolerated or allowed in the Church of God in any part of Chriſtendom, but once, and that was by virtue of a Licence and privilege granted by certain *Popes* to the *Mendicant Fryers* to intermeddle in matters of Pariſh Churches, * as to hear Confeſſions, to preach and teach, with power thereunto annexed to *gather the benevolence of the people for their labour.* Which occaſioned ſuch a contention in *France* between the *Prelates* and the *Fryers* there, *An. Dom.* 1354, that the Prelates of *France* convening and Aſſembling together in the City of *Paris*, cauſed by the *Bedles* to be called together all the Students,

* *Ex ſcriptis* Godfri. de fontantis.

Students, Masters, and Bachelours of every Faculty, with the chief Heads of all the Religious houses, and *Fryers* in the University of *Paris*; who being all congregated together in the Bishop of *Paris* his house, where there were present 4 Archbishops, 20 Bishops; and all the rest of the Bishops throughout the whole Kingdom of *France*, except those who were necessarily absent, with full consent did send in under their hand-writing, a complaint against the insolency & Presumption of the *Fryers*. The Bishop of † *Byters* Preaching in that Assembly on that Text of St. *Paul, Eph.* 3. 18. *ut sciatis quæ sit longitudo, latitudo, altitudo & profunditas charitatis*, took occasion to shew, "That by the vigour of true "charity every man ought to hold him- "self content with that which was his "own, and not to intermeddle or busie "himself farther than to him appertain- "ed or belonged to his Office. For there "(saith he) all order Ecclesiastical is "dissolved, whereas men not containing "themselves in their own precincts, "presume in other mens charges where "they have nothing to doe. But this "Charity (saith he) now-adays wax-

"eth

† *Episcopus Byturisensis.*

"eth cold, and all Eccleſiaſtical order is "confounded, and utterly out of order. "For many there be now-adays which "preſume to thruſt in themſelves where "they have nothing to doe, ſo that "now the Church may ſeem a Mon-"ſter. For as in a natural body ap-"peareth a Monſter, when one Mem-"ber doeth the office of another; ſo "in the ſpiritual body, which is the "Church, it may be thought like-wiſe.

Againſt the ſame evil and ungodly practice of the *Fryers* in our Land and Nation, at the ſame time, did that famous, godly and learned, *Richard Armachanus* Archbiſhop and Primate of *Ireland*, inveigh in 7 or 8 Sermons preach'd on purpoſe in *London*: For which being cited by the *Fryers* before *Pope Innocent* the Sixth, to appear: So he did; and before the face of the *Pope* valiantly defended both in word and writing, that it was better for the pariſhioners to leave the *Fryers*, and to reſort to their own *Paſtours*, for that the ordinary *Paſtour* is properly appointed of God unto that Miniſtry which he exerciſeth amongſt them, whereas the *Fryers* were but onely permitted of man

there-

thereunto: and therein he ſtood conſtant unto the Death. For theſe are the words of *John Wickliff* (as they are quoted by ‖Mr. *Fox*) *Ab Anglorum Epiſcopis conductus Armachanus novem in Avione concluſiones coram Innocentio 6, & ſuorum Cardinalium cœtu, contra fratrum mendicitatem audacter publicavit, verboque ac ſcriptis ad mortem uſque defendit.*

‖ *Act. mon. T. 1. p.* 533.

Now if this be the order which God hath eſtabliſhed in his Church, That People ſhould be divided into flocks, that every flock ſhould have their own Paſtour, and that they ſhould depend upon him; then he can by no means endure to ſee a breach of that order in his ſervice, that he hath ſet. How much it hath diſpleaſed him, appears in that famous inſtance in 1 *Chron.* 15. 13. *Becauſe they ſought him not according to the right order, therefore God made a breach upon them.* And what that breach was both of *order* on the Peoples part, and of *puniſhment* on God's part, may be ſeen, *Cap.* 13. 9, 10. *Uzzah*, out of a very good intention put forth his hand to ſtay the *Ark* when it was in danger of falling, and therefore was ſmitten with

with ſudden death; according to the juſt threatning of God, pronounced before. * *They ſhall not touch any holy thing leſt they dye.* God will be worſhipped and ſerved, not onely in his own ordinances, but in his own order alſo. There are many duties, † *quæ cum bona ſint opera, perniciem pariunt, cum non eo ordine quo ſunt conſtituta peragantur*; which though they be good works, yet the doers of them may be damned, becauſe they doe them not in that order they ſhould. Upon this account *Mart. Luther* ſharply reprehended thoſe of *Wittenberge*, who in his abſence had abrogated the private Maſs and Idols; had celebrated the Lord's Supper under both kinds; had taken away auricular Confeſſion, ſuperſtitious differences of meats, invocation of Saints, and many other Popiſh fopperies, and intolerable abuſes in the Church; ‖ *non quod impie feciſſent, ſed quod non ordine.* Not but that the work was good in it ſelf, but it was ill done, becauſe not done in a right order; and therefore it was juſtly culpable and blameable in them. Circumſtances of actions often marr the ſubſtance. In divine Worſhip our care muſt

* Num. 4. 15.

† Arnob. *Conf.* Serapion.

‖ Melchior Adam: *in vit.* Luth. *p.* 123.

must not onely be to the matter of the service, that it be good, but to the circumstances also wherewith it is attended, that they be warrantable by God's word, or at least, not contrary thereunto. God requires that even the * *wood*, and every part of the *sacrifice* offered to him, be † *in order*. And doth God look for *order* among *sticks*? And doth he not much more require order to be kept in the use of those means by which he hath appointed to bring Souls to Heaven?

* Lev. 1. 7. 8.
† Gen. 22. 9.

What gross absurdities would unavoidably follow, from such a manifest breach of order in the Church? If one Minister may intrude into another's Parish and Congregation, and there set up a course of private house-preaching, and other ministerial Acts; why then may not the *Bishop* of one Dioceſs thrust himself into the Dioceſs of another, and there take upon him to ordain Presbyters, and exercise Episcopal jurisdiction, whether the Diocesan will or no? Which as it is contrary to all good Laws and Order, so hath been always forbidden and condemned by the Judgment of the Fathers of the Church assembled in Council.

Council. Not onely in that of *Carthage*, before mentioned; but alſo in a Council at *Antioch* it was decreed ‖ *non licere uni Epiſcopo in Diœceſi alterius Epiſcopale officium exercere.* And in the 36*th* Canon of thoſe which goe under the Name of the Apoſtles, it was ordained; *Epiſcopum non audere extra terminos proprios ordinationes facere, in civitatibus & villis quæ illi nullo jure ſubjectæ ſunt. Si vero convictus fuerit*, &c. That no Biſhop ſhall dare to confer orders out of his own Dioceſs, in any City or Village, which by no Law or Right is in ſubjection to him; and if he ſhall be convicted ſo to doe, without the conſent or leave of thoſe to whom thoſe Cities or Towns do belong, he ſhall be depoſed, and thoſe that are ordained by him.

‖ *Concil.* Antioch. *Can.* 13. & 22.

So likewiſe in *Civil affairs*, why then may not a Judge who is Commiſſionated for the *Northern* Circuit, thruſt himſelf into the place and office of him that is appointed for the *Weſtern*, ſit on the bench, judge cauſes, and condemn Malefactours *in alieno foro?* Which were the way to overthrow all Juſtice; according to that known Axiome in the Law, *Sententia a Judice non SUO lata, nulla*

nulla est ipso jure. And, in *Military* matters, why then may not the *Colonel* of one *Regiment* (or a *Reformado* Officer that hath lost his Company and hath none left to command) intrude himself into another Regiment, and there take upon him to muster the Souldiers, and lead a party? Which is the onely way to open a Flood-gate to all Confusion and disorder that is imaginable, to the Destruction of Magistracy, Ministry, Judges, Armies, and all things.

Now *order* being a great part of God's Law, he that wilfully breaks good order, makes himself guilty of the breach of the whole Law; and so makes void his Plea for an ordinance of God which may be instrumental to beget faith or grace in the Souls of those that attend unto it.

The Queen of *Sheba* when she had seen the good order of the Servants that ministred to King *Solomon*, was so astonished with admiration, that * *there was no spirit left in her.* If order in a Family doth so draw the Eyes and Minds of the Beholders to it, how much more amiable is order in the Church, which † is *the house of the Living God*, where

* 1 King. 10. 4. 5.

† 1 Tim. 3. 15.

where a greater than *Solomon* is always preſent, and where the Glory of the Lord appears in the way and means of the Salvation of Souls?

ARGUMENT. III.

THAT cannot be the ordinance of God, as a means of grace, that hath no promiſe of God's bleſſing made or annexed to it. For though it be a *Paul* that *plants*, and an *Apollo* that *waters* * yet it muſt be God that *gives the bleſſing*, or elſe all their labour will be to no purpoſe. * 1 Cor. 3. 6. Pſal. 127. 1, 2.

I deny not but that there may be a very good uſe made of the meetings of Chriſtians together, otherwiſe than in the publick Congregation, when they are Lawfully and orderly regulated, without manifeſt breach of any Divine or humane precept, without intrenchment upon, or infringment of any Goſpel-order or ordinance, and that they may ſo expect God's bleſſing on them.

Yet becauſe *Satan* hath ſtretched his helliſh Subtilty to the higheſt, in theſe

laſt times (with too unhappy Succeſs) to put eaſie and well-meaning people out of the ſure and ordinary way of God's bleſſing, by diſparaging the publick Church Aſſemblies, and advancing private, irregular, and diſorderly meeting (where there is not that ground of expectation of Divine concurrence) into competition with yea prelation above them: therefore (makeing a little more than ordinary ſtay here) I ſhall endeavour to let the Reader ſee how the Spirit of God in Scripture hath commended the publick Aſſemblies to us, by affixing more ſpecial promiſes of his preſence with, and benediction of them, than on any other, though ordered in all things never ſo rightly: and how it hath recorded the faith of good men in their belief of theſe promiſes, teſtified in their eſteeming, uſeing, and frequenting the publick ordinances of God accordingly. † *Glorious things are ſpoken of thee, oh thou city of God.*

† Pſ. 87. 3.

To the ancient people of God, the *Jews*, the ſpecial promiſes of Divine preſence were made in their *Church Aſſemblies.* || *In the places where I record my*

|| Exod. 20. 24.

my name, I will come unto thee and will bleſs thee. * *In the Tabernacle (ſaith God) I will meet thee and Commune with thee of all things.* Which promiſes were always performed accordingly as may be ſeen in *Lev.* 9. 23. 24. *Numb.* 1. 1. *Numb.* 7. 89. Thence it was that the *Tabernacle* of the Jewiſh Church, had the name of † the Tabernacle of meeting, or the *Tabernacle of the Congregation.* To thoſe that attended God there, his bleſſing was aſſured. || *Bleſſed is the man whom thou chuſeſt, and cauſeſt to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy Court, he ſhall be ſatisfied with the goodneſs of thy houſe even of thy Holy Temple.* * *Bleſſed are they that dwell in thy houſe, they ſhall ever be praiſing thee.* † *He bleſſeth thy Children within thee, O Sion.* || *Bleſſed is the man that heareth me, watching dayly at my Gates, waiting at the poſts of my doors;* ſaith Chriſt the Wiſedom of the Father. And that was the reaſon of *David's* ſo great love to the Church. * *Lord, I have loved the habitation of thine houſe, and the place where thine honour dwelleth.* And of his deſire † *to remain in God's houſe all*

* Exod. 25. 22. —29. 42.

† Exod. 30. 6. 40. 34.

|| Pſ. 65. 4.

* Pſ. 84. 4.

† Pſ. 147. 13

|| Prov. 8. 34.

* Pſ. 26. 8.

† Pſ. 27. 4.

the days of his Life, that he might behold
‖ Pſ. 48. 9. *the beauty of the Lord.* And ‖ *we have*
דמה *waited* (for ſo the word may be read)
Cum ſilentio expectare. *for the loving kindneſs of the Lord in the midſt of thy Temple.*

Theſe promiſes of God's ſpecial and extraordinary bleſſings, on the *Church Aſſemblies* of his People in former ages, were ſo generally known and believed of holy men in thoſe times, that when any of them prayed for any ſpiritual grace or mercy in behalf of any other, they
* Pſal. 134. 3. uſually expreſſed it in this form. * *The*
† —133. 3. *Lord bleſs thee out of Sion.* † *For there*
‖ —118. 26. *the Lord commanded the bleſſing even life for evermore.* So again. ‖ *We bleſs you out of the houſe of the Lord.* They ſeem to be the words of the Prieſts whoſe office it was, at the diſmiſſing of the Congregation of God's People
* Num. 6. 24. to * *bleſs them in his houſe.* They be-
† Deut. 10. 8. ing appointed of God there to † bleſs in his name. Whoſe benedictions there pronounced, did not prove an empty ſound of words in the air, but from the Temple at *Jeruſalem*, where they were ſpoken, they mounted up to *Heaven* where they were heard and anſwered
‖ Chr. 30. 27. ‖ *For the Prieſts and Levites aroſe and bleſſed*

bleſſed the People, and their voice was heard, and their prayer came up to his holy dwelling place, even unto heaven.

In which reſpect the publick worſhip of God, is called * *his face and preſence.* *Cain*, for the Murther of his Brother, being debarred the benefit of God's publick worſhip, complains † I *ſhall be hid from thy face, i. e.* from the face and preſence of God in his Church: as appears afterward. || *And Cain went out from the preſence of God, and dwelt in the Land of Nod: i. e.* from the place of God's publick worſhip, which in all likelyhood, was celebrated by *Adam* the Father, * who being a Prophet, had taught his Children how to ſacrifice, and to ſerve the Lord.

* Pſal. 105. 4. — 42. 2.
† Gen. 4. 14.
† ver. 16.
* Ainſworth *in Loc.*

Thither God's People reſorted in multitudes: and *David* profeſſeth that nothing in all his Life hapned to him more pleaſant, than to ſee ſuch flocking to God's houſe; and that he could goe thither with them: as nothing aggravated his miſery more in his perſecution by *Saul*, or by his Son *Abſolom*'s rebellion (for 'tis uncertain whether of the two was the occaſion of *Pſal.* 42.) than that he could not have the happi-

neſs that formerly he enjoyed of being one of the firſt and forwardeſt in going
* Pſal. 42. 4. thither. * When I *remember theſe things* (ſaith he) I *pour out my Soul in me.* And why? becauſe there he enjoyed God in a more ſpecial manner than he could elſewhere: thither he
‖ ver. 2. came, ‖and *appeared before the face of God.* What longings he ſhewed for God's publick worſhip at another time, when By *Saul's* perſecution he was forced from the Temple at *Jeruſalem*, into the Wilderneſs of *Judah*, and wandered in the deſart, may be ſeen in *Pſal.* 63. Though it was grievous to him to fall from that dignity and favour he formerly had, and wherein he flouriſhed in *Saul's* court: though it was hard for him to loſe all his goods, to be alienated from all his friends, to be forced to converſe among ſtrangers and infidels, and to expoſe his life to all ſorts of hardſhips and hazards, yet all theſe he counted ſmall and Light matters, in compariſon of this one great evil, that he was forced to be abſent from *Church*, and to abide there, where there was no publick Miniſtry or worſhip of God. And therefore making

making no mention at all of any of those other evils, he makes this his onely request, that he might be restored again, *ut sacris publicis, & Cœtui piorum interesse possit*, that he might have the liberty of God's house again. Though he might, and doubtless did, converse with God in the *Desart*, pouring out his Prayers to him, which was the onely support he had in his exile; And though no doubt those godly friends he had left about him (for he had such in whose society he might take great comfort in his banishment, he had both ‖ a *Prophet*, and * a *Priest*) did join with him in the private service of God, yet this contented him not, he longs still for the publick worship, bewails greatly the want of it, his ‖ speeches are all of the heavenly benefit of it, and the happiness of such as had free access to it. He knew he could no where perform divine worship, with so free and glad an heart, with so much comfort and assurance of so large a blessing, as in that place, where the Ministry was publick, and where the Multitude of God's people did serve and worship him. There he vows his service, * *I will give thee*

Mollerg. *in loc.*

‖ 1 Sam. 22. 5.

* — 23. 9.

‖ Ps. 84. 1--5.

* Ps. 35. 18.

thanks in the great Congregation, I will
‖ Pſ. 111. 1. *praiſe thee among much people.* ‖ *I will praiſe thee with my whole heart in the aſſembly of the upright, and in the Congregation.* And calls upon others to doe
* Pſ. 29. 1, 2. the like. * *Give the Lord the glory due to his Name, worſhip him in the beauty of holineſs.* It was no ſmall bleſſing promiſed to good King *Hezekiah*, that his recovery from his ſickneſs ſhould be ſo ſoon effected, that he ſhould not be detai-
‖ 2 King. 20. 5. ned from going to *Church*, but ‖ the *third day* he ſhould be able *to go up to the houſe of the Lord.* The hearing whereof was equal comfort to him, with the news of the enlargement of the leaſe of his life. It hath even been a ſad affliction to the Souls of God's people, to ſee the *Church-aſſemblies* neglected, and the Congregations more empty than they were wont to be, and to be debarred the liberty of frequenting them, as being thereby deprived of the moſt lively repreſentation of Heaven on Earth, to the obſcuring much of God's Glory, which is ſeen and ſpoken of in the Sanctuary, and the ſeducing them from the mutual and comfortable Fellowſhip one of another in his ordinances,

and

and from much refreſhing and help they had by theſe means. * *I will gather them which are ſorrowfull for the ſolemn Aſſemblies, who are of thee, to whom the reproach of it is a burthen.* 'Tis the Character the Holy Ghoſt makes of a true Child and Member of the Church, to be thus affected. When ever God's people did ſhew a more than ordinary deſire to prevail in prayer, they have ſhewed more than ordinary care that the Aſſemblies might be as publick, and as full, as could be, as 'tis noted by ‖ a worthy Divine of ours. * *Blow the Trumpet in* Sion, *ſanctifie a Faſt, call a ſolemn Aſſembly, gather the People, aſſemble the Children*, &c. In the Faſt which King *Jehoſaphat* proclaimed, it is ſaid. ‖ *All* Judah *ſtood before the Lord, with their Little ones, their Wives and their Children.* And it was in the publick place of God's worſhip, * *the houſe of the Lord* that they met. The People of *Iſrael* went up to the *Houſe of the Lord* to ask counſel concerning their War with *Benjamin.* And this they did more than once, and till they did ſo, they prevailed not. The like courſe took King *Hezekiah* at his keeping the Paſſover

* Zeph. 3. 18.

‖ Mr. Hild. *on* Jo. 4. *p.* 118.
* Joel. 2. 15.

‖ 2 Chron. 20. 13.

* V. 5.

Paſſover to make the Congregation in the *houſe of the Lord* (the Temple at *Jeruſalem*) as great as he could. ‖ *Hezekiah ſent to all Iſrael and Judah, and wrote Letters alſo to Ephraim and Manaſſeh that they ſhould come to the houſe of the Lord at Jeruſalem, and keep the Paſſover unto the Lord God of Iſrael.* And as there they have prevailed with God in Prayer, more than they could any where elſe; ſo there God hath taught them more than they could learn any where elſe. * *When I ſought to know this* (viz. the Doctrine of God's providence and wiſedom in the juſt and righteous management of the affairs of the world) *it was too painfull for me* (ſaith *David*) *till I went into the Sanctuary of God, then underſtood I their end.* When all means elſe did fail, the publick Miniſtry, (through God's bleſſing on it) became effectual to bring him to underſtanding in this Myſtery. Therefore he concludes, ‖ *thy way, O God, is in the Sanctuary.*

‖ 2 Cron. 30. 1.

* Pſ. 73. 16.

‖ Pſ. 77. 13.

And as in Goſpel-times we have the like promiſes of God's ſpecial preſence in the publick Congregations of his People (*Mat.* 28. 20, 2 *Cor.* 6. 16. *Rev.* 1. 13.)

ſo

ſo it was profeſſed long before, that there the Godly ſhould exhort and ſtir up one another, to ſeek the true Knowledge of God and his ways, *Eſ.* 2. 3. *Mic.* 4. 2. which was fulfilled accordingly, both in the Diſciples of Chriſt after his Aſcenſion, * *who continually were in the Temple*; And alſo in the converted Jews and Gentiles, who † *continued daily in the Temple with one accord.* So did the Chriſtians in the primitive times, in their Churches their Miniſters did preach ‖as frequently as the perſecution of thoſe times would permit. And there the People aſſembled themſelves together to hear. They did not divide themſelves, ſome of the Congregation going one way, and ſome another, but * *they came together in one place.* And that place was the *Church.* † If not the publick place of worſhip, ſo called, (as moſt think,) yet the place where (by reaſon of the hot perſecution of thoſe times) the whole Church did, or could meet together. And St. *Hierome* gives this commendation of the Faith of the primitive Chriſtians at *Rome.* ‖ *Ubi aliibi tanto ſtudio & frequentia ad Eccle-*

* Luc. 24. 53.

† Act. 2. 46. —5. 42. —19. 8.

‖ Act. 19. 8. —5. 21. 25.

* 1 Cor. 11. 20.

† 1 Cor. 11. 18. — 14. 30. Jam. 2. 2.

‖ Hierom. *ut citatur a Centur. Magdeburg. cent.* 4. c. 6. p. 272.

ſias

ſias concurritur? ubi ſic ad ſimilitudinem Cæleſtis tonitrui Amen reboat; & vacua Idolorum templa quatiuntur? non quod aliam habeant Romani fidem; niſi hanc quam omnes Chriſti Eccleſiæ; ſed quod devotio in iis major ſit, & ſimplicitas ad credendum. In what part of the World elſe is there ſuch ſtudious flocking and reſort to Chriſtian Churches, as here? Where elſe doth the *Amen* of the Congregation, ſound ſo loud, as that it ſeems to equalize a Clap of Thunder in the Air, inſomuch that the Idol-temples being left empty, are made to tremble therewith? Not that the *Romans* had any other Faith, than the other Churches of Chriſt, but they had more devotion and ſingleneſs of heart in believing. To this alſo agrees the Teſtimony of St. *Auguſtine*, * *primi credentes in templo veteri Domino ſervierint*: the firſt and new Chriſtians did ſerve God in the old Temple.

* Aug. L. 3. de. Doct. Chriſti.

It will be ſaid by ſome; to what purpoſe is all this that hath been alledged out of the old Teſtament, touching God's promiſes to, or benediction of the *Church-aſſemblies* of the *Jews*? Their *Tabernacle* and *Temple* were holy places,

ces, and the ſanctification of them was *Levitical*, and therefore now aboliſhed, and not to be applied to our *Churches*.

This paſſeth with ſome for an objection that hath force enough in the bowels of it to overthrow and demoliſh the whole fabrick of this my third Argument.

But if we carefully look into the inſide of it, and not tamely deliver up our hold, we ſhall find no ſuch formidable matter in it. For, as for the City of *Jeruſalem*, the *Tabernacle* and *Temple*, they were, in themſelves, places no more holy or religious than any other places in the Land of *Canaan* were, or than any other places now in *England* are: But they were therefore holy, *Partly* becauſe they had many things in them and their worſhip, that were *typical* and *ceremonial*, which are now aboliſhed. The *Temple* and *Tabernacle* were types of the body and humane Nature of Chriſt. *Joh.*2.19.21. *Heb.*8.2. *Heb.*9.11. And this (I grant) might be one reaſon that moved *David* in his baniſhment, ſo earneſtly to deſire his return to the Temple. *Pſ.*42.3. And in the beginning of the New Teſtament,

we

we reade of certain holy and devout
† Luc. 2. 37. —18. 10. persons, that when they prayed, † *they went up to the Temple to perform their devotion.* And those that could not repair to *Jerusalem*, they might and did
‖ Dan. 6. 10. pray elsewhere, but it was ‖ *with their faces towards the Temple.* And *Partly*,
* Exod. 20. 24. because God placed a memorial * *of his Name there:* or caused his Name to be remembred there. *i.e.* did set apart those places for his publick worship and service, as monuments of him. For as
‖ 2 Sam. 18. 18. *Absolom* erected a Pillar ‖ to keep his Name in remembrance, so did God chuse out those places to put his Name there. And therefore they were called
* Deut. 12. 5. * *his habitation.* In this respect our *Churches* now are every whit as holy as *Jerusalem*, the *Tabernacle*, or *Temple* there was, being places lawfully set apart for God's publick worship, to have his *Name* remembred and *placed there.* And so the *Tabernacle* and *Temple* had this in them and their worship, that was moral, and consequently of equal concernment to us now, as to the Jews then, that publick places ought to be assigned for God's publick worship, every way fitting and convenient for

Eccle-

Eccleſiaſtical conventions, where all the Congregation ought to meet, as in a place where God will vouchſafe to be more graciouſly preſent in his worſhip, than elſewhere, according to all thoſe his gracious promiſes.

And touching the holineſs of the *Tabernacle* and *Temple*, that is excepted againſt in the objection, as being not to the preſent purpoſe: Let the anſwer of that learned and pious Gent. Sir *Henry Spelman* in his book ‖ *de non temerandis Eccleſiis*, be heard and well conſidered, and the reader will eaſily find what hath been alledged out of the Old Teſtament maketh much for my preſent purpoſe: his words are theſe,

‖ Pag. 14. 15. 16.

"The *Temple* was ſanctified unto "*three functions*, which alſo had three "ſeveral places aſſigned to them. The "*firſt*, belonging to the *divine preſence*, "and had the cuſtody of the *holieſt* "*types* thereof; the *Oracle*, the *Ark*, "the *Mercy-Seat*, &c. And was there-"fore called *Sanctum Sanctorum*, the "Holieſt of all. The *ſecond* was for "*ceremonial Worſhip* and *Atonement*: "*viz.* by Sacrifices, Oblations, and o-"ther Levitical Rites; the place there-

of

" of being the *Sanctuary*, (wherein
" were the holy Veſſels) and the Court
" of Prieſts, wherein the Altar of
" burnt Sacrifice did ſtand: The *third*
" was for ſimple Worſhip, Prayer and
" Doctrine (without any pomp or
" ceremony.) And the place of this was
* 2 Chron. 4. 9. " the outward (Court called * *Atrium*
——6. 12. " *populi*, and ‖ *Solomon's Porch*) which
‖ Act. 3. 11. " had therefore in it, no *ceremonial*
" implement at all.

" The two firſt of theſe functions,
" with the places belonging to them,
" were indeed particularly appropriated
" to the Law: for they were *Ceremo-*
" *nial*, *Myſtical*, *Secret*, *Levitical*, *Ju-*
" *daical and Temporal*. *Ceremonial*, as
" celebrated with much worldly pomp.
" *Myſtical*, as figuring ſome ſpiritual
" things. *Secret*, as either performed
" behind the veil or curtain, or elſe
" ſequeſtred and remote from the Peo-
" ple. *Levitical*, as committed onely
" to the adminiſtration of that tribe.
" *Judaical*, as ordained onely for the
" ſalvation of that people. And *Tempo-*
" *ral*, as inſtituted onely for a ſeaſon,
" and not to continue. But the *ſancti-*
" *fication* of the *third function*, and the
" place

" place thereunto appointed, was di-
" rectly contrary to all the points al-
" ledged to the former two. First it
" was for *ſimple Worſhip, Prayer and*
" *Doctrine*, which were there to be per-
" formed and delivered in all *ſincerity*,
" without any Ceremony or ceremoni-
" al Implement uſed therein. Secondly,
" there was no matter of *Myſtery* there-
" in to be ſeen; but whatſoever was
" *Myſtical* in the Law or the Prophets,
" was there expounded. Thirdly, no-
" thing was there hidden or *ſecret* from
" the People, but acted wholly with-
" out the veil and publickly for every
" man. Fourthly it was not appropri-
" ated to the *Levites*, but common a-
" like to all the tribes. Fifthly, not or-
" dained for the *Jews* particularly,
" but for all Nations in general. And
" laſtly, not to endure for a *time* (as
" thoſe other two of the Law) but to
" continue for ever, even after the Gen-
" tiles were called, as well as the Jews;
" that is, during the *time of the Goſpel*,
" as well as of the *Law*. Therefore,
" ſaith God, by *Eſaias* the Prophet
" * *my houſe ſhall be called an houſe of* * Eſ. 56. 7.
" *prayer to all Nations*. He ſaid not, an

" houſe

" house of *sacrifice* to all Nations; for
" the *sacrifice* ended before the Calling
" of the *Gentiles*, and so they could have
" no part thereof. Nor an house of
" prayer for the *Jews onely*, for then
" had the *Gentiles* (when they were
" called) been likewise excluded: But
" *an house of prayer to all Nations*, i. e.
" Jews and Gentiles indifferently,
" which therefore must have relation to
" the times of the Gospel: and conse-
" quently the sanctification of *that house*,
" and of that *function*, is also a *sanctifi-*
" *cation* of the *Churches* of the Gospel.

" We reade not therefore that Christ
" reformed any thing in the other two
" functions of the *Temple*, for they were
" now as at an end. But because this
" *third function* was for ever to continue
" in his Church, therefore he purged
" it of that which prophaned it, resto-
" red it to the original *sanctity*; And
" that the future world (which was
" the time of the Gospel) might bet-
" ter observe it, than the precedent,
" and the time of the Law had done,
" he reporteth and confirmeth the de-
" cree, whereby it was sanctified, *It is*
" *written* (saith he) *my house shall be*
" *called*

" *called an houſe of prayer to all people.*
" He ſaith, *my houſe*, excluding all other
" from having any property therein;
" for God will be joint-tenant with no
" man. And it ſhall be *an houſe of*
" *prayer for all people*, i. e. publick, for
" ever, and not private. The time alſo
" when our Saviour proſlotmced thoſe
" words, is much to the purpoſe: for
" it was after he had turned out the
" Oxen and Doves, that is, the things
" for *ſacrifice*. As though he thereby
" taught us, that when the *ſacrifical*
" *Function* of the Temple was ended,
" yet the *ſanctification* of it to be an
" houſe of prayer ever remained.

Thus far this learned Gentleman, whoſe words (becauſe every one to whom this may come, may not have that Book in readineſs to peruſe) for the readers ſatisfaction, I have faithfully tranſcribed. By which judicious and learned diſcourſe it doth plainly appear, that the holineſs of the Jews *Tabernacle* and *Temple* was not altogether *Levitical*, nor aboliſhed, but of perpetual duration in Goſpel-times, and that our *Churches* now are holy as theirs were then; the ſanctification of theirs

was the ſanctification of ours; and therefore thoſe promiſes of divine preſence and bleſſing made to them in their *Church-aſſemblies*, do belong to us, as well as to them.

To ſuch therefore as neglect the *Church* now, and ſay, they can ſerve God as well elſewhere, as there; I ſay, 'Tis true, as we are private Chriſtians and ſingle perſons, ſo no doubt according as the exigence of our affairs require, we may any where, or at any time, doe God acceptable ſervice. It was foretold that in Goſpel-times || *In every place incenſe ſhall be offered to the Name of the Lord.* And as St. *Paul* bids us, *pray continually*, ſo our Saviour, *when you pray enter into your Cloſets.* But as we are members of the viſible Myſtical body, which is the Church of Chriſt, ſo we are bound to conſtant attendance on the publick ſervice of God, *in his houſe.* Though not *altogether* now in reſpect of the place, yet ſtill in reſpect of the *Congregation* that do and ought to meet in that place, and the worſhip of God that is, and ought there to be publickly performed. And *very much* in regard of the place too;

|| Mal. 1. 11.

1. As

1. As it is a place freely given and ſurrendred up into the hands of God, the great Land-lord of the whole world, by the donation of the right owner, under God, of the Land, and Founder of the Edifice.

2. As it is hallowed and dedicated to the publick ſervice of God in ſuch a ſolemn manner, as hath been the cuſtom and uſage of God's people in all ages of the world, both of the *Jews* in the Old Teſtament, and of the *Chriſtians* in the New, from the beginning, in the pureſt times untill now, at the time when it was delivered up into God's poſſeſſion, and when the uſe whereunto it ſhall ever ſerve, is eſtabliſhed.

3. As it is accepted and owned by God, being thus given and ſet apart for him; and he is pleaſed to take *Livery and Seiſin* of it, as his houſe (which is as really true of our *Churches* at their Conſecration, though not as viſibly, as it was of * *Solomon's Temple* at its dedication) for the performance of his publick worſhip and ſervice, and intitles it himſelf || *My houſe of prayer*. And the Argument which our Saviour uſeth to prove his property in that houſe, is taken

* 1 King. 4. 10, 11.

|| Mat. 21 13.

ken from the use for which it was appointed; which extends its force equally to our *Churches* now, as to the *Temple* at *Jerusalem*, seeing they are both set apart to the same purpose, even for publick prayer to, and worship of God.

4. As 'tis a place to which God hath by promise assured his own gracious and heavenly presence and blessing, and where he may be and is enjoyed, in a more special manner than elsewhere, and consequently where there is more profit and good to be received by the service of God done in the Congregation and assembling together of his people there, than in any other house whatsoever. And therefore though there is not *that* holiness affixed to places now since our Saviour's coming into the World, as there was before, yet our assembling together in the *Church* is as holy now as then, and better than elsewhere. And whereſoever the Scripture seems to take away all religious differences of places, as if no place were holier than another, (as in *Mal.* 1. 11. *Joh.* 4. 21. 1 *Tim.* 2. 8.) It is true of *inherent* holiness, but not of *relative*. And this must be always remembred

(to

to prevent miſtake) that the Holy Ghoſt doth no where compare private and profane places, with publick and conſecrated, as if the worſhip we doe to him were as much to his Glory, or as good and profitable to our ſelves and others which we doe in thoſe places, as that which we doe in the *Church*. But he compares publick places then, with publick now, and private with private; and his meaning is, that not onely at *Jeruſalem*, and among the Jews God ſhall have an houſe for his publick worſhip, but in all Nations where he ſhall be pleaſed to beſtow his Goſpel. God will not be worſhipped in the *Temple* at *Jeruſalem* onely, nor ſhall his preſence be tyed to that place more than to other ſuch like houſes of God elſewhere; but he will have houſes, which ſhall be properly his own, and ſet apart for his publick worſhip and ſervice *amongſt all Nations*. It was a part of that heavy Yoke that was intolerable on the Necks of our Fathers, that they muſt take long and tedious journeys, to come from all Quarters of their Country to one place to worſhip; and that they did

not dare, no not in case of absolute ne-
cessity, to perform publick service in
any other place; yea that their very
private Devotions were to be performed
either * *in*, or † *toward* that place: But
now, besides our Closets for our private
Devotions, we have *Churches* in our se-
veral Towns, Parishes and Villages,
where we may be sure to have God
present to hear, accept and bless us, if
we can find honest and good hearts
to resort to them. Every place hath
God's presence, and therefore is, in it
self, alike sanctified for his service; but
every place is not alike separated from
common and profane use, and dedica-
ted and consecrated to God, nor ow-
ned and accepted by him; and there-
fore we have no reason to expect God's
presence, or to meet with the like bles-
sing in one place as in another. And
therefore (saith that holy and ancient
Synod at *Gangra* in *Paphlagonia*, under
Constantine the Emperour) ‖ *Omnem lo-
cum ædificatum in nomine Dei honoramus,
& Congregationem in Ecclesia factam ob
utilitatem communem recipimus.* We do
honour every place built in the Name
of God, and do reverence and receive
the

* Luc. 2. 37. & 18. 10.
† Dan. 6. 10.

‖ *Concil.* Gangrens. *in subscriptione, habitum circa Ann. Domini.* 314.

the Congregation met in the *Church* for the Common advantage. *Churches* then are holy, and to be reſpected and frequented rather than other places, becauſe of their holy Uſe, and for the holy Aſſemblies there made. And therefore that ſame Council decreed, * *Si quis docet domum Dei contemptibilem eſſe, & Conventus qui in ea celebrantur, anathema ſit.* Curſed be he that ſhall teach, that the Houſe of God may be ſlighted, or the Congregations that aſſemble therein. And in the next Canon, they think fit to ordain, † *Si quis extra Eccleſiam ſeorſum Conventus celebrat, &c.* Curſed be he that ſhall keep any Convention out of the *Church*. And the ſame Synod (as Hiſtory || tells us) condemned and depoſed *Euſtathius* Biſhop of *Sebaſtia* in *Armenia*, for perſwading ſuch as refrained the *Church* and publick Aſſemblies, to raiſe Conventicles and Brotherhood in their private Houſes. "And in the Civil Law it is decreed, "* That the ſacred Myſtery or Myſte- "ries be not done in private Houſes, but "be celebrated in publick places, leſt "thereby things be done contrary to "the Catholick and Apoſtolick Faith; "unleſs

* *Concil.* Gangrenſ. c. 5. *Citatur etiam in decret. diſt.* 30. *Can.* 10.

† *Can.* 6.

|| Socrat. *Hiſt. Eccleſ. L.* 2. *c.* 43.

* *In collatione quinta Authenticorum.*

" unleſs they call to the celebrating of
" the ſame ſuch Clerks of whoſe Faith
" and Conformity there is no doubt
" made, or elſe that are deputed there-
" unto by the good will of the Biſhop.
" If any thing be done to the contrary,
" the Houſe wherein theſe things are
" done, ſhall be confiſcated, and them-
" ſelves ſhall be puniſhed at the diſcre-
" tion of the Prince.

'Tis true St. *Paul* commands us
† 1 Tim. 2. 8. † *Every where to lift up holy hands with-*
out wrath. But thoſe hands cannot be
pure that are profane; and they cannot
have other than ſuch, who contemn
‖ Hooker *Eccleſ. polit. L. 5. Sect. 16.* the *Church.* ‖ *As therefore we exhort all*
men every where to worſhip God, even
ſo for the performance of this ſervice by
the People of God aſſembled, we think
not any place ſo good as the Church, nor
any Exhortation ſo fit, as that of David,
O worſhip the Lord in the Beauty of
Holineſs. But now (alas) we live to ſee
thoſe prophetique words, uttered by a
Sir Walter Rawleigh *in his Hiſtory of the World.* Lib. 2. Cap. 5. Sect. 1. Learned and judicious Gentleman a-
bove 60 years agoe, to be verified and
fulfilled to the utmoſt. He diſcerning
then the great increaſe and growth of
Sectaries in this Realm ſaid; That time
would

would ſoon bring it to paſs (if it were not reſiſted) that God would be turned out of Churches into Barns, and from thence again into Fields, and Mountains, and under Hedges: and the Office of the Miniſtry (robbed of all dignity and reſpect) be as contemptible as thoſe places; all Order, Diſcipline and Church-government left to the newneſs of Opinion and Mens fancies; yea and ſoon after, as many kinds of Religions ſpring up, as there are Pariſh Churches within *England*, every contentious and ignorant Perſon cloathing his Fancy with the Spirit of God, and his Imagination with the Gift of Revelation.

By all which hath been ſaid (wherein I hope the candid Reader will pardon my Prolixity in this plain Vindication of the languiſhing Reputation of Church-aſſemblies) it appears that the ſpeciality of Divine promiſes are made to the publick Diſpenſation of God's ordinances, and that we may expect a greater Bleſſing upon them, in our Church-aſſemblies, than elſewhere.

But I know no promiſe of God at all, made to ſuch Preaching and Meetings,

as

as are in queſtion. God hath not engaged himſelf for a Bleſſing to any People, waiting on him (as they count it) in a way out of his appointment, yea contrary to it. But as he hath forbidden to hear Intruders, *Jer.* 27. 14, 15. So he hath expreſly ſaid, there ſhall no Bleſſing at all accompany ſuch a Miniſtry and ſuch attendance on it. Let that place in * *Jeremiah* be noted, *I ſent them not, nor commanded them, therefore they ſhall not profit this People at all, ſaith the Lord. Sive vera prædicent, ſive falſa,* Saith † a *Presbyterian* Divine: Whether they preach that which is true, or that which is falſe. The queſtion is, not *de facto*, but *de jure*, not what they teach, but by what warrant. Thence it was, as ‖ *Tarnovius* thinks, that our Saviour Chriſt rebuked the Devil, and commanded him ſilence, not ſuffering him to ſpeak, when he confeſſed and declared the moſt neceſſary and Soul-ſaving truth in the World, *viz.* * that *Chriſt was the holy one of God*, becauſe he had no calling ſo to doe. The words of St. *Paul* are full to the ſame purpoſe. † *How ſhall they believe on him, of whom they have not heard?*

*Jer. 23 32.

† Vines *Sermon on* 2 Pet. 2. 1. *p.* 9.

‖ Tarnov. *de S. miniſt.* c. 8.

*Mark 1. 25.

† Rom. 10. 15. *Quiſquis in Eccleſia docet,*

heard? And how ſhall they hear without a Preacher? And how ſhall they preach except they be ſent? The Apoſtle ſpeaks of ſuch preaching and hearing as ſhould beget Faith, and by which, Grace is ordinarily wrought and increaſed in the Soul, and upon which, People may expect God's Bleſſing. Now thus none can hear without a Preacher, neither can any thus preach, *i. e.* profitably to beget Faith, except he be ſent. They cannot be ſucceſſull in their Miniſtry without a Miſſion. They may *talk*, as Uſurpers; but not *preach*, as God's Ambaſſadours. They may ſatisfie the *Itch* of the *Ear*, but they cannot be inſtrumental to work Grace in the heart. God will not concur with that Miniſtry he ſends not. Our Saviour Chriſt ſaith, *John* 10. 8. *All that ever came before me are Thieves and Robbers.* Why, *Moſes* and the Prophets, the Prieſts and Levites were before Chriſt. Were they all *Thieves* and *Robbers*, and none of them true *Paſtours*? The *Emphaſis* lies in the word [*came*] which being rightly underſtood, makes it as true, that all that ever *came*, or ſhall come after Chriſt are *Thieves* and *Robbers* alſo, as well

non vocatus & miſſus à Chriſto, invadit alienam poſſeſſionem, fur eſt & latro; venit, in nomine ſuo, non Dei; Chriſti miniſter non eſt, verbum Chriſti non habet: imo ne quidem Eccleſiæ dici miniſter debet, quem ipſa non vocavit; turbator eſt boni ordinis, cauſa confuſionis, quæ non à Deo eſt. Nic. Arnobd9. *in refutat. Cat.* Racov. *p.* 724.

‖ Hierom. *ad verſ.* Pelag. *l.* 2. well as thoſe that *came* before him. ‖ St. *Hierome's* note upon the text makes it clear. *Venerunt inquit Chriſtus, non qui miſſi ſunt, de quibus Propheta, veniebant a ſe & ego non mittebam eos.* Our Saviour doth not ſay that all that were ſent before him, were *Thieves* and *Robbers*, but all that *came* before me. Plainly ſhewing, that whoſoever ſhall *come* amongſt the People of God his Church, to perform the Office of the Miniſtry, of his own accord; without a lawfull *Sending*, is a *Thief* and a *Robber*, and none of Chriſt's true *Sheep will*, or ought to *hear him.*

Obj. But it will be ſaid, the Preaching and Miniſtry of ſuch Perſons as are in queſtion, is the Preaching and Miniſtry of Perſons ſent; for they are Perſons in holy Orders, and Miniſters ordained.

Anſw. 1. 1. I deny not, but that ſome of ſuch Perſons as are in queſtion, may be lawfully ordained Miniſters (all are not, to my knowledge) yet it followeth not preſently from thence, that they are *ſent* to preach, or to perform Acts of the Miniſtry. For it may ſo be in a true ſetled and conſtituted Church, that for a lawfull Cauſe, and by

by lawfull Authority, a Perſon ordained may be depoſed, and juſtly ſuſpended from performing any miniſterial Acts; as *Abiathar* in the Church of the Jews was by King *Solomon*. Otherwiſe, Miniſters in their Office were Lawleſs, and exempt from all legal and juſt Reſtraint and Cenſure. And although a Perſon in holy Orders cannot have his Ordination ordinarily made void by any, *quoad internam poteſtatem*, in regard of the inward Power of Order that is conferred on him in his Ordination, ſo as upon his Reſtauration he need be re-ordained; yet it may be made void *quoad externam executionem*, in regard of the outward Execution of that Power in the Church, either in publick or private, either for a ſet-time or ſeaſon, or elſe during his Life. It is in the Power of the Church and Governours thereof, to ſuſpend a Miniſter from the Execution of his Office, though it be not in their Power to raſe out that *Characterem inſculptum*, that intrinſical Authority received in his Ordination. And a Perſon ſo lawfully ſuſpended by Authority, as is ſaid, may he in ſuch a caſe execute the Of-

fice

fice of the Miniſtry, or may he not? If ſo, then Acts of lawfull Authority in the Church ſignifie nothing; Governours and Government, and Church-diſcipline is a mere empty Name, and but a Cypher. Then might *Abiathar* have executed the High-prieſt's Office, Notwithſtanding King *Solomon*'s Exauctoration of him. And ſo the Ordinance of God in the Church, to which all ſtand bound in *Conſcience*, to be *in *ſubjection*, will be made void and of none effect. If not, then ſuch Miniſters as notwithſtanding their legal Reſtraint, or ſuſpenſion from Execution of their Office, do yet conſtantly execute the ſame, by preaching and other miniſterial Duties, otherwiſe than by the Law they are allowed, cannot be ſaid to be ſent of God, ſince they are inhibited by God's Vicegerents on Earth; and conſequently have not that ſending, which the word of God ſaith is neceſſary to thoſe, whoſe preaching is to be inſtrumental to work Faith, and other ſaving Graces in the Hearts of God's People.

* Rom. 13. 5.

Anſ. 2. But what calling or ſending can ſuch a Miniſter as is in queſtion, pretend to, for

for his ſetting up a Courſe of Houſe-preaching, or other miniſterial Acts, in the place or Pariſh, where there is a publick conſtant preaching Miniſter eſtabliſhed by Law? If he hath any, it muſt be either *extraordinary*, or *ordinary*, for there is not a third way of calling or ſending.

Extraordinary calling or ſending is that, which is done by God himſelf immediately, without the Concurrence or Miniſtry of any humane Help or Authority. † *Not of man, nor by man.* † Gal. 1. 1. Either,

1. By divine Viſion or Revelation: and thus St. *Paul* was called and ſent to preach the Goſpel at *Macedonia* || *A Viſion appeared to* Paul *in the Night, ſaying, come over into* Macedonia *and help us; And after he had ſeen the Viſion, immediately we endeavoured to go into* Macedonia, *aſſuredly, gathering that the Lord had called us to preach the Goſpel unto them.* || Act. 16. 9, 10.

2. By ſecret impulſe on mens ſpirits for this work, wrought by the extraordinary Power of God in the Primitive times. Such was * *Philip* the Deacon's going to the City of *Samariah*, and * Act. 8. 5.

preaching the Gospel unto them, after the dispersing the Church at *Jerusalem*. Such also was the Calling of those who at the same dispersion, first preached † Act. 11. 19. 20. Christ at *Phœnicia and Cyprus* † and the Hand of God was with them, though otherwise they were but private Persons.

Now I think no wise men will pretend to these *extraordinary* Callings or Sendings in these days. It is sufficient to say they are *extraordinary*, and such as but in like Cases cannot be expected. *Extraordinary* onely take place where *ordinary* are not to be had. The internal and *extraordinary* sending is secret and invisible, and therefore it is not sufficient for a man to say that he is sent of God, seeing every Heretick may say the same; but he ought 2 Joh. 7. ‖ Exod. 4. 2. to prove his *extraordinary* and invisible ——— 8. 19. Calling by the working of some ‖ *Miracle*; or by some special testimony of Joh. 5. 36. Mat. 10. 8. *Scripture*. 2 Cor. 12. 12. 'Tis true *John Baptist* had an immediate and extraordinary Calling, * Joh. 1. 6. * and yet wrought no Miracle, (that was reserved for the *Messiah*, of whom he was the immediate Forerunner, to manifest himself unto the world by) but then, that Calling of his was foretold

and

and witneſſed by plain teſtimonies of † *Scripture.* And the manner of his Birth, and Condition of his Life (as it was well known to all *Iſrael*) were no other than miraculous and extraordinary. † Eſ. 40. 3. Mal. 3. 1.

Ordinary calling or ſending to any place, to preach the Goſpel, and to execute the Office of a Miniſter there, in a ſetled and conſtituted Church is, when a Perſon in holy Orders hath the cure and care of a Flock or Congregation of God's People committed to him, to preach the Goſpel to them, and to perform all other miniſterial Acts amongſt them, by the Miniſtry of thoſe Men, who under God, have Authority ſo to doe, according to good and wholſome Eccleſiaſtical Laws and Conſtitutions in that behalf made and eſtabliſhed. ‖ *God calleth ordinarily by his Church, her voice is his. Therefore whenſoever the Church of God, that is, the learned, wiſe, godly, and ſuch as the Church hath publickly appointed for that purpoſe, ſaith to any thou ſhalt be ſent to ſuch a place, thou ſhalt goe for us; then doth God call; ſaith* Mr. *Perkins.* Sending implies the Act of another that hath Power and Authority to ſend. He cannot be ‖ Perk. *de dig. miniſt. pag.* 459. *and* 462.

ſaid to be ſent, that comes to a place, and there takes upon him to preach and doe all miniſterial Acts, of his own accord. He comes not in Chriſt's Name, but his own. And a Chriſtian can in nothing ſhew himſelf more impudent, than in embracing ſuch, as Teachers ſent from God, that come in their own Names. * *If one come in his own Name, him ye will receive:* ſaith Chriſt to the Jews, blaming them much for it. And becauſe there are ſo many that are apt to run before they are ſent, it is neceſſary, that whereſoever any Perſon undertakes to preach the word, his calling to that work be clear and manifeſt, both in reſpect of his own Comfort and the Peoples profit. Though St. *Paul* was immediately called of God, yet he was ſent to † *Ananias* for impoſition of his hands, that it might be clear to the Church that he was called. And when he was to be ſent to the *Gentiles*, he was again by impoſition of hands || *ordained* or appointed to be their Doctour, that ſo his Calling might be publickly declared to be lawfull, and that none elſe might intrude into it. And if this were neceſſary in him, who

* Joh. 5. 43.

† Act. 9. 17.

|| Act. 13. 3.

was

was immediately called of God, how much more neceſſary is it in all thoſe, who have not now that extraordinary Calling, but onely are mediately ordained and appointed to that work by thoſe men, who under God have power to ſend and appoint Paſtours over the ſeveral Flocks of his People in the Church?

Now if ſuch a perſon as is in the queſtion, cannot make out his calling or ſending, by one of theſe two ways, to ſuch a Town or Pariſh, where he takes upon him thus to execute the Office (or any part of it) of a Miniſter; certainly then he hath no Calling or ſending at all: But is like one that ſhall enter into another man's houſe, at the *window*, or ſome other way, than by the door: and that (we know) is no fair poſſeſſion of an houſe; he that enters in at the windows, ought to be thrown out of doors. Of ſuch our Saviour ſaith * *Verily, verily I ſay unto you, he that entreth not by the door into the ſheepfold, but climbeth up ſome other way, the ſame is a Thief and a Robber.* And, if ſuch, as they can be no other, who baulking the lawfull and ordinary

* Joh. 10. 1.

Qui autem non fideliter intravit, neque per

Chriſtum, quidni infideliter agat, & contra Chriſtum. Bernard. *ut citatur à* Tho. Mortono. *Apol. cath. pag.* 62.

way of entrance by the Authority of thoſe, who derive their power on earth from Chriſt, and break in without, yea againſt the Laws and Leave of their Governours that act in Chriſt's Name and Stead) then are not they ſent of God, and conſequently have none of God's promiſes of bleſſing annexed to their Miniſtry.

This is that which renders the beſt actions that can be performed by the Sons of Men, to be ſinfull, when they are done unlawfully, and by ſuch as have no particular Calling or Command for the doing of them. This doth quite alter and diverſifie the nature of actions, ſo as that they are varied from what otherwiſe they would be, to ſome other things. It is a rule as true, as old; *Bonum extra proprium ſubjectum, in malum mutatur*; Every good thing, out of its proper place and ſubject, is turned into evil. *V. g.* In the *natural* body of man, the hand is a very good and uſefull member, for the offices of Common life; yet if the hand be out of its proper place, and grow either out of the Head or Leg, or elſewhere, where it ought not, it is no

longer

longer a good or uſefull member, but a deformed and monſtrous excreſcence of Nature. In the body *politick* or ſtate, the execution of wrath upon him that doeth evil, is a very juſt and good work; yet if it be done by one that hath no Authority or Commiſſion, at leaſt in ſuch a place or circuit, it is not juſtice, but murther. *Ammon* abuſing his Siſter *Tamar* by filthy inceſt, ought by the Law of God to dye, *Abſolom* killed him with the Sword; and in ſo doing he did the very thing that † God commanded: Yet *Abſolom* ſinned greatly in doing it, becauſe he was not the man that ought to have done it, but *David* the King. In the *Eccleſiaſtick* body, the Church, the preaching the word is an excellent ordinance of God, for the ſaving of them that believe, as ‖ *fooliſh* as the world do account it: But if it be performed by one that hath no Authority or Commiſſion for ſo doing, nay, that is under a juſt and legal prohibition and reſtraint from the doing it at all, it is not preaching, but quite another thing, even what the Apoſtle calls it * *beating the air*. Whenſoever a Commandment is limited to

† Lev. 18. 9. 29.

‖ 1 Cor. 1. 21.

* 1 Cor. 9. 26. Job. 15. 3.

persons and places, that Command makes it a sin to them, if they leave the thing required undone; and the not commanding, yea, forbidding, makes it a sin to others that shall doe it, because 'tis the Precept that makes the thing to such persons, in such places, to be lawfull or sinfull. Wrath hath been revealed from Heaven on such, as have rashly adventured on a thing that in it self hath been very good, yet had no particular Command for it. † 2Sam.6.6,7. This appears plainly in the case of † *Uzzah*. Though his intention was good, yet it belonged not to him to touch the *Ark*, for the charge and care thereof was committed to ‖ others. ‖ Numb.4.15. It is the Policy of *Satan*, if he cannot prevail with men to abide and abound in those things which are (materially) evil, but they will needs be doing good, then he will draw them on to doe that good unlawfully, without a calling to it or warrant for it. And it were well that People who are so easily misled by the specious pretext of good, were not ignorant of this Wile of the Devil, whereby he deceives simple souls, not a few. When we set upon the performance

mance of any thing, it ſhould not be enough to weigh with our ſelves how *good* it is, but to look what *warrant* we have to doe it. The manner of performances is to be regarded, as well as the matter: For God ſtands upon Circumſtances as well as Duties. * *It ſhall be then our righteouſneſs, if we obſerve to doe all the Commandments before the Lord our God, AS HE HATH COMMANDED US.* Say we doe what is commanded, yet if we doe it not as he commanded us, it is not right in God's ſight, who requires that a thing be not onely good, but alſo regularly performed. It is not the material goodneſs of the work, that will free us from ſin, but the Command we have out of God's word for the doing it. Neither can we depend upon any promiſe for a bleſſing, when we have not God's Precept for the action.

* Deut. 6. 25.

The promiſe of edification in faith, knowledge and holineſs, is ſpecially appropriated to the Miniſtry of that Perſon, who is regularly and orderly in God's ways, ſet over a Congregation. Chriſtians own paſtours have a more ſpecial diſpenſation of the Grace of God given

given them, to them-ward; as St. *Paul* the Doctour of the *Gentiles* had, towards that People, of whom he was appointed the proper Minister. And

† *Mr.* P. Baines *on.* Eph. 3. 2.

(saith Mr. *Baines*) † *If this were well considered it would cure in us that affectation of the confluence of strangers, when our hearts do not so fervently embrace our own Pastours. And it should instruct People to depend especially upon those who are set over them; for these are they who are furnished from God in a eminent manner, with grace towards them. They are foolish sheep that know not their own shepherds voice, and foolish People that know not their own Ministers.*

And in reason, whose Ministry may we think God will bless, either his, to whom the Flock is committed by himself; who ‖ *is over them in the Lord*, whom * *God hath made their overseer*, who have † *the rule over them, watching for their Souls, as those that must give an account?* Or his, who runs before he is sent, who hath no lawfull call to the Congregation, *ordinary* or *extraordinary*; who hath no relation at all to the Flock, ‖*whose own the sheep are not*, he having no charge of them, nor any account

‖ 1 Thes. 5. 12.
* Act. 20. 28.
† Heb. 13. 17.
‖ Joh. 10. 12.

account to make for them (other than for his irregular intruſion amongſt them, taking upon him to doe that he hath no right to doe, and for ſeducing them away from their own Paſtour) be his parts and qualifications otherwiſe Angelical, and his Doctrine never ſo Evangelical?

Paſtours of Congregations are called * *Chriſt's Ambaſſadours* to their People. It is their Commiſſion that makes their Embaſſie ſucceſsfull. Another, perhaps, may be of equal, or greater fitneſs for the Employment, but he onely that hath deputation for the ſervice, is received and hath audience. Thoſe that have no lawfull miſſion to a Congregation, but intrude themſelves amongſt them, may ſpeak the truth, as well as they that have; yet of him that acts by lawfull appointment, we may ſay, that he *preacheth with Authority*, and not like thoſe that come in by ſtealth and uſurpation, and have no other right there to preach, than what themſelves have made. They are called † *overſeers*. It is not for every man to overſee the eſtate of another; they onely can do it, who by ſome Deed or Com-

* 2 Cor. 5.20.

† Act. 20. 28.

Commiſſion are impowered to under-
take it. Nay (which is a dreadfull
Conſideration) they muſt ſo overſee
‖ Heb. 13. 17. the Flock ‖ that they may *give an ac-*
count for their Souls. Is there any ſuch
charge given to, or undertaken by thoſe
unſent teachers, who love to be heard
and ſeen in exerciſing their parts, but
not in taking cure or charge of Souls?
* 1 Cor. 4. 1. They are called * *Stewards.* It is not
for any one to be a ſteward in another
man's houſe, to feed the Family; but
for him onely whom the maſter of
that houſe ſhall appoint. The miniſte-
rial parts performed by a lawfull Paſtour
† Gen. 49. to his own Flock, are like † *Jacob's*
bleſſing his Sons; another man might
have done it as rhetorically, and, per-
haps, as affectionately, but not ſo ef-
fectually, becauſe none had that Right
and Authority to doe it, as he. Of all
acts, thoſe that are done *ex officio*, by
virtue of an office, and from a lawfull
deſignation and appointment for the
execution of that office, to, or for
ſuch a Perſon or People, are under a
more ſolemn aſſurance of a bleſſing.
It is no Soleciſm to ſay, God will hear
their Prayers, and bleſs their Pains
when

when he will neither hear, nor bleſs the Prayers or Pains of any elſe. My ‖ *Servant* Job *ſhall pray for you* (ſaith God) *for him will I accept. Eliphaz* and his two friends were good men, yet God would not give anſwer to them, but to *Job* onely. See *Gen.*20.7. *Eſ.* 37.4. *Jam.*5.14. ‖ Job. 42.8.

If that place in * *Matthew* be urged, to prove a promiſe of a bleſſing to ſuch preaching and meetings as are in queſtion; *Where two or three are met together in my name, there am I preſent in the midſt of them.* * Mat. 18. 20.

I anſwer, that although I conceive the primary and principal Intent and Scope of our Saviour in that place, was not to ſpeak of religious Meetings, for the preaching and hearing of his word; but of the Meetings of Eccleſiaſtical Judges of the Jewiſh *Sanhedrin* in their Conſiſtory (as the Context doth declare) yet becauſe all God's promiſes are *great* and *pretious*, and we ought not to loſe ought of them, but improve them to the utmoſt for his Glory and our Comfort; therefore ſuppoſe it be taken and to be underſtood of religious Meetings alſo (as 'tis ſo applied by the *Church of England* in her Liturgy,

Liturgy, yet to no other, but our Church-aſſemblies) yet (I ſay) that text annexeth a Promiſe onely to ſuch Meetings as are *in Chriſt's Name*. Now the meaning of that phraſe is commonly expounded to be, at my Command. *Nam in nomine Chriſti, idem eſt quod ex authoritate.* So our Saviour himſelf uſeth the phraſe: † *I am come in my Father's Name, id eſt*, at his Command; as he expounds it himſelf. ‖ This Commandment have I received from the Father. So St. *Paul* uſeth the phraſe, * *Now we command you brethren in the Name of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; id eſt*, by the Authority of our Lord Chriſt committed unto us by him, as if Chriſt ſhould command by ‖ us. So every inferiour officer amongſt us, doth uſe the phraſe, I require you *in the King's Name, id eſt*, by Authority derived from him. See *Act.* 4. 7.

† Joh. 5. 43.

‖ Joh. 10. 18. ——12. 49. ——14. 31.

* 2 Theſ. 3. 6. 1 Cor. 5. 4.

‖ Act. 19. 5. *Significatur non forma quâ in baptiſando uſi ſint Apoſtoli; ſed authoritas Chriſti, ex cujus præſcripto utebantur baptiſmo.* Chamier. T. 1. L. 2. c. 4. 5. 5. p. 15. vide Jewel's *Reply to* Harding's *Anſwer. Pag.* 116.

And ſhould we extend the promiſe, without reſtraint, to other Meetings under pretence of religious Worſhip, than ſuch as are grounded on Chriſt's Authority;

1. Then we ſhould make our own wills, fancies and affections, maſters of

of our actions, and endeavour to bring down the presence of Christ to such irregular Conventions, as are altogether disagreeing with, yea contrary to his Will and Command, which were not onely absurd, but impious to attempt or think.

2. Then also may a Congregation of 1000 People, divide themselves (contrary to good Laws of God, his Church and the Realm) into 500 Couples, in so many several places, and in so many several forms of worship, and yet expect Christ's presence and blessing with them all, in ways so abominable to God, and so apparently destructive to his intire body the Church, which he hath purchased with his most pretious bloud.

3. Where were then the threatnings of his withdrawing from our Assemblies upon just occasion? God hath said **Your Sabbaths, your Calling of Assemblies, I cannot away with, it is iniquity even your solemn Meetings; my Soul hates them, they are a trouble to me, I am weary to bear them.* And, *I* ‖ *hate, I despise your Feast-days, I will not smell in your solemn Assemblies, i.e.* I will not accept with Favour (as I did *Noah's* *Sacrifice) their solemn Assemblies.

* Isa. 1. 13, 14.

‖ Amos 5. 21.

* Gen. 8. 21.

In

In another place the Holy Ghoſt uſeth
‖ Lev. 26. 31. the ſame expreſſion, ‖ *I will not ſmell the Savour of your ſweet Odours.* It is a Judgment (ſaith *Ainſworth*) oppoſed to that bleſſing promiſed in *v.* 12. *I will walk among you.* God threatens to deny his preſence to their Aſſemblies, and one reaſon is given by a Divine of
* Mr. Hutcheſon *in* Amos 5. 21. the *Presbyterian* Judgment; * *Becauſe they were not any way of Divine inſtitution, but of their own invention, and therefore all along they are called* your *or* thine.

Now ſhew me where Chriſt in all the Old or New Teſtament, doth either command, or allow any ſuch Miniſtry, and attendance on it, as is in queſtion, and then I ſhall acknowledge it to be the Ordinance of God, and that this promiſe belongs to it: but not till then.

In the mean time I may well (without any digreſſion) retort upon the objectours, and tell them, that in my Judgment, they are far out of the way, either of obedience to Chriſt's Command, or of hopes of enjoying his bleſſing promiſed, who in reſorting to ſuch kind of Meetings, for which they have neither

neither a command nor promiſe, ſe-parate and withdraw themſelves from the publick aſſemblies, and attendance on his worſhip and ordinances there, where God hath aſſured us of his preſence and bleſſing, and whither he hath enjoyned us conſtantly to repair. For as that Miniſter, who ſhall upon any pretence whatſoever of his own forſake a Congregation over whom he was placed by God, and goe to another without any lawfull call, is like *Jonah*, who being ſent by God to *Nineve*, ſinned greatly in going to *Tarſhiſh*, though he had preached never ſo duely and diligently there: So thoſe People who in any meaſure neglect the publick, for thoſe private aſſemblies, are like *Micah*, who in the time of the *Judges*, when there was a publick Miniſtry in the place which the Lord had choſen for that purpoſe, inſtituted a private worſhip and miniſtry in his own *houſe*, a certain peculiar *Levite* being called and ſet apart for that work. And no wiſe man that ſhall reade his ſtory, will think it ſafe to follow his example. Well may ſuch a Perſon flatter himſelf in his courſe, and ſay in

* Judg. 17. 13. his heart, as he * *Now I know the Lord will doe me good, seeing I have a Levite to my Priest.* But (as *Junius*) † *hominis imperiti sermo est, & in pietate parùm instituti.* That saying of his shews him to have but little wit, less religion, and that he was but in a golden dream or Fool's Paradise all that while, though he thought himself wiser and in a better case than his neighbours. But this was done when there was *no King in* Israel, *and every man did that which was right in his own eyes,* otherwise so abominable an act could never have passed so clearly as it did.

† Junius *in loc.*

By such I would be soberly and soundly resolved of this demand. *Are* the People of *England* in their present state and condition (assembling themselves together in publick places appointed for God's worship, under the teaching and ministry of their lawfull Pastors, that are set over them by Authority) a true Church, or true Churches, or not?

If they say, no: they doe that which God (blessed be his name) hath not yet done, unchurch us; and lay us under a judgment, which he hath

hath not yet laid upon us, *viz.* a divorce from *Jesus Christ.* * *Let thou O Lord art in the midst of us, and we are called by thy name; leave us not.* † Through the infinite goodness of the most high, we have wherewithall to confute that unchristian and uncharitable judgment of theirs, since we have both the *matter* and the *form* of a true Church.

* Jer. 14. 9.

† *Si ecclesiam non habet Christus, nisi inter P. tantum, nimium pauper factus est.* Hieron. *adv. Luciferanos.*

The *matter* is a multitude of rational Creatures that profess saving truth contained in the word of God. *Simon Magus* and the *Eunuch* upon their profession, were admitted Members of the Church; and Members do constitute the body.

The *form* of a true Church is a gracious call into the dignity of the Children of God, so as that *Christ* becomes united to them. As the *form* of a man is the Soul united to the body, so the *form* of a Church, which is his body, is *Christ* united to it. We have the word and laws of *Christ*, and those he makes effectual for the convincing of all, and conversion of some. And this is an irrefragable argument to evince our Church to be a true Church, even

in the judgment of the *Presbyterian* Divines themſelves. For to thoſe of the *Independent* way, that ſeparate from them, theſe are their words:

* *Vindicat. of Presbyt.* p. 122.

* "We beſeech you to conſider, whether ye did not receive the word of converſion from ſin to God which ye preſume to be wrought in you, firſt of all in thoſe publick aſſemblies from which ye now ſeparate? And if ye found *Chriſt* walking amongſt us, how is it, that ye do now leave us? If the preſence of *Chriſt*, both of his power and grace be with us, why do ye deny your preſence? Are ye holyer and wiſer than *Chriſt*? Is not this an evident token, that we are true Churches and have a true Miniſtry, becauſe we have the ſeal of our Miniſtry, even the converſion of many Sons and Daughters to God? Doth not the Apoſtle † from this very ground argue the truth of his Apoſtleſhip? Is it not apparent that our Miniſters are ſent by God, becauſe their Embaſſage is made ſucceſsfull by God for the good of Souls? *Did ye ever reade of true converſion ordinarily in*

† Cor. 9. 2.

" *falſe*

" *false Church? Will the Lord concur*
" *with those Ministers he sends not?*
" *Doth not the prophet say the quite*
" *contrary?* Jer. 23. 23. And therefore
" either renounce your conversion, or
" be converted from that great sin of se-
" parating from us.

Again, where there are the infallible marks of a true Church, there is a true Church. But we have the infallible marks of a true Church, *viz.* the word of *Christ* truly taught, and his Sacraments rightly administred.

First for the word of *Christ*. The Church is (according to the proper signification of the word ἐκκλησία) a People called forth from the rest of the world; * *called to be Saints.* Now the best note to know a People called, is by the voice calling; this was ever an infallible mark of *Christ's* Church. First among the Apostles, who were called out from amongst others, by the word of *Christ*, to become followers of him. Then amongst others, as they were added to the Church, they were called by the word; witness that great work of conversion wrought by the Ministry of St. *Peter*, † As one

* Rom. 1. 7. 1 Cor. 1. 2.

† Act. 2.

Sermon three thousand were severed from the rest of the world, and *added to the Church.*

Next for the Sacraments, these rightly administred are certain marks of a true Church; for they are the Seals set by God to his word, the signs of his Covenant, whereby he binds himself to be our God, and receives us to be his People. They are sure pledges of his love to us, which we really have till we come actually to be possessed of perfect holiness and glory with *Christ.* Whilst we have these blessed ordinances of his amongst us, his word truly preached, and his Sacraments rightly administred, it is not the rash censure of a few giddy heads, that can unchurch us.

If they say we are a true Church, then God is ever with us, (*Es.* 45. 14.) in our assemblies at all times, and in all parts of his worship. * *Lo, I am with you always to the end of the world.* † *I will dwell in them, and walk in them, and will be their God, and they shall be my People.* Thence the Holy Ghost in Scripture, calls the Church, ‖ *his house,* † *the dwelling place of his Name,* the

* Matt. 28. 20.
† 2 Cor. 6. 16.
‖ Ps. 74. 7.
† Ps. 76. 2.

place where his honour dwells, the Preſence Chamber of the great King, &c. And as the glory of the Lord did ſenſibly appear in the *Tabernacle*, Exod. 40. 34. and in the *Temple*, 1 Kings 8. 10. So doth it now in our Church-aſſemblies, as really and truly, though not as viſibly, as then. * *For if the Miniſtration of Death was glorious, how ſhall not the Miniſtration of the Spirit be glorious? If the Miniſtration of Condemnation be glory, much more doth the Miniſtration of Righteouſneſs exceed in glory. If that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious.* * 2 Cor. 3. 7, 11.

Now if God be preſent with, and in our aſſemblies, how dare any that are, or ought to be Members thereof, abſent themſelves? Dare ye to withdraw at any time from God's preſence, whoſe *face* at all times ye are † commanded to *ſeek*? I ſpeak not of his omnipreſence, in regard of the immenſity of his eſſence, which fills all places. God fills every place, and fills it by containing that place in himſelf. But I ſpeak of that ſpecial preſence, which he hath promiſed to afford to his † Pſal. 27. 8.

Church, manifesting himself in that place and assembly more graciously, than elsewhere.

If then we retain our Conjunction with *Christ*, why do ye refuse Communion with us? May we not therefore justly charge you as guilty of making a *Schism* in the Body of *Christ*? That we may, by your own Doctrine. For (say the *Presbyterian* Divines) * "If the Apostle calls those divisions "of the Church of *Corinth*, wherein "Christians did not separate into di-"vers formed Congregations, of se-"veral Communions, in the Sacra-"ment of the Lord's Supper, *Schism*, "1 *Cor.* 1. 10. may not your Secession "from us, and profession that ye can-"not joyn with us as Members, and "setting up Congregations of another "Communion be more properly cal-"led *Schism*? And presently after they distinguish (out of *Camero*) of a two-fold *Schism*, *negative* and *positive*. The former is when men do peaceably and quietly draw from Communion with a Church, not making a head against that Church from which they are departed: The other is, when persons so with-

* *Vindicat. of Presbyt.* p. 113, 114.

withdrawing, do conſociate and draw themſelves into a diſtinct and oppoſite Body, ſetting up a Church againſt a Church, which *Camero* calls *Schiſm by way of Eminency*. Now if this were true Doctrine in thoſe days, againſt thoſe who were then concerned in it; I know no reaſon why the ſpace of a few years ſhould ſo alter the caſe, but that it is as true now againſt themſelves, who now doe what they then condemned in others, *viz.* not onely withdraw from our publick aſſemblies, but ſet up *Church* againſt *Church*. And therefore (to uſe their own words) "Ye muſt "not be diſpleaſed with us, but with "your ſelves, if we blame you as guil-"ty of poſitive *Schiſm*. And that is no ſmall fault in the judgment of any ſound Divine, but a far greater than the fault, upon which they pretend ſeparation. The things for which they make a rent, are not ſo great a fault in the Church, as the want of Charity in them which prompts them ſo to doe. It is a ſin of the firſt rate, and one of the greateſt ſize that a Chriſtian can commit, in the judgment of the Brethren of the *Nonconformiſts* themſelves,

ſelves, though now it goes down glib with too many of them, who notwithſtanding are obliged to the extirpation thereof, not onely by the common bond of Religion and Chriſtianity, but alſo by the ſecond Article of their *ſolemn League and Covenant*, taken with hands lifted up to the moſt high God; wherein they rank it with *Popery*, *Superſtition*, *Hereſie*, *Profaneneſs*, *and whatſoever is contrary to ſound Doctrine and the power of godlineſs*. Let the words of Mr. *Baxter* be noted as an evidence of this truth. * "If the "Scripture were Conſcionably obſer- "ved, men would take Church-divi- "ſions for a greater ſin than Adultery "or Theft. Mutinies and Diviſions do "more infallibly deſtroy an Army than "almoſt any other fault, or weakneſs: "and therefore all Generals do puniſh "Mutineers with death, as well as flat "Traytors. Our Union is our ſtrength "and beauty: commonly they that "divide for the bringing in of any in- "ferioùr truth or practice, do but de- "ſtroy that truth and piety, that was "there before. I like not him that "will cure the head-ach by cutting the

* *Chriſtian Concord. pag.* 119.

" the throat; yea, it is a greater ſin
" than Murther (ſaith Mr. *Paget*.) A
" Murtherer † killeth but one man or † *Hereſiog.*
" two, but a Schiſmatick goes about, *pag.* 78.
" as much as in him lies, to deſtroy
" the Church of God. Yea, it is worſe
" to make a *Schiſm* in the Church,
" than to Sacrifice to an Idol, ſaith
" * Mr. *Calamy* out of St. *Cyprian.* * *Serm.* De-
cemb. 25.
1644.

And may Chriſtians then play at faſt and looſe with the bonds of holy Communion at their pleaſure? St. *Peter* could ſay † *Lord whither ſhall we goe? thou haſt the words of Eternal Life.* Where this word is truly Preach'd in the way of *Chriſt*'s appointment, and the reſt of his worſhip celebrated accordingly, wo be to thoſe that are not found there alſo. Chriſtians in the pure and primitive times, did not take this Liberty in point of Church-fellowſhip, but (by the acknowledgment of the Divines before mentioned, and Oh that their Practices now did not contradict their words then) ‖ " All ſuch who ‖ *Vindicat. of*
" profeſſed Chriſtianity, held Communi- *Presbyt. pag.*
" on together, as one Church, notwith- 120.
" ſtanding the difference in judgment in
" leſſer things, and much corruption in
" Conver-

" Converſation. *Cain* was the firſt that
* Gen. 4. 16. ever ſeparated from the Church; * *he went out from the preſence of God.* God is every where, the meaning therefore is, from his *Church*, the place of his publick worſhip, which was then in his Father's Family. And will it be ſafe for any to follow ſuch a Preſident?
† Jude 11. † The Apoſtle pronounceth a *woe to them that walk in the way of* Cain. Thoſe that walk in his way, can expect no leſs than to arrive at the place whither he is gone before. And if ye would know who they are that ſo
‖ Jude 19. walk, the Apoſtle tells you, ‖ *theſe are they that ſeparare themſelves.* *Pareus* his gloſs on the words are not unworthy obſervation: * *Quia ſibi ipſi fingunt peculiarem cultum, ideo ſeſe ſegregant ab eorum Eccleſia ac cœtu.* They feign to themſelves a peculiar way and manner of worſhip, therefore they will not joyn with us in ours, but withdraw from our aſſemblies; as if he had purpoſely deſcribed the humour of the men of our times. However ſuch may pretend to the Spirit, as if they were more Sanctified than their Brethren, yet the Apoſtle by infallible guidance,

* Pareus *in Loc.*

pro-

pronounceth them *Senſual not having the Spirit.* And that is the reaſon they keep the Unity of the Church no better. For (as *Fulgentius* ſaith) *Tales itaq; faciles ſunt ad diviſionem, quia ſpiritum non habent, in quo uno membra Chriſti charam ſervant Spiritualiter unitatem.* Such Perſons are prone to all diviſions, becauſe they have not that Spirit, in whom alone all the Members of *Chriſt* do Spiritually keep Unity among themſelves, as a dear and pretious thing. As the Soul in man's Body doth ceaſe to quicken any Member ſundred from the Body, and the ſcattered bones in *Ezekiel's* Viſion, received no life till they were incorporated and knit together in one by * *Sinews, Fleſh* and *Skin*: ſo the Spirit of God, which is the Soul of this myſtical Body, denies the derivation of Grace and Comfort, to thoſe that ſeparate themſelves from it.

† Fulgent. l. 2. ad Monim. pag. 67.

* Ezek. 37. 7.

If they ſay, we are a true Church, and that they and their Party ſeparating from us and meeting in private aſſemblies, are a Church alſo, and ſo they do not ſeparate and withdraw themſelves from the Church.

Then

Then I say that their Church, in that case, refusing Communion with ours, is, (at least) a distinct Church from ours; and so there are two Churches of *England* in this Nation. And so they make *Christ* to have two bodies distinct under one head; which is contrary to sundry plain Texts of Scripture. * *Though there be threescore Queens, and fourscore Concubines, and Virgins without number, yet my Dove, my undefiled is but one.* † *We being many are one body in* Christ. And, ‖ *As the body is one and hath many members, and all the members of that one body being many, are one body, so is Christ.* Again, * *There is one Body, one Spirit, one Hope, one Lord, one Faith,* &c. And, † *is* Christ *divided?*

* Cant. 6. 8, 9.
† Rom. 12. 5.
‖ 1 Cor. 12. ——12.
* Eph. 4. 45.
† 1 Cor. 1. 13.

There cannot be two such opposite Churches in one Nation, but one of them must needs be an Harlot, and not the Spouse of *Christ*. And that their Church (as they call it) and not ours, is so, may easily be made to appear to any man that will vouchsafe to weigh matters in the balance of Reason and Judgment. The whole World is divided betwixt God and the Devil;

Devil; there is not a third Party that can challenge any ſhare in the Race of mankind. All Societies and Companies of Men and Women in the world, are either the Church of *Chriſt*, or the Synagogue of Satan, *Rev.* 3. 9. * An aſſembly of Saints, or a congregation of evil doers, *Pſal.* 26. 5. And that theirs is not the Church of *Chriſt*, appears thus: Thoſe aſſemblies or congregations where there is no true and lawfull Paſtor, nor true and lawfull Flock, are not the Churches of *Chriſt*, but of Satan: for (as it hath been ſhewed before out of the Scriptures and Fathers) † a lawfull Miniſter, and a Flock or Congregation of People lawfully committed to his charge, make up a Church: that is the definition of a particular Church. But their Churches (as they call them) have neither true and lawfull Paſtors, nor Flocks: therefore they are not the Churches of *Chriſt*, but the Synagogues of Satan, and Congregations of evil doers. That they have no true and lawfull Paſtors, is clear. 1. Becauſe many of them that head thoſe unlawfull meetings and aſſemblies, were never ordained by Prayer

* *Sit una Eva mater cunctorum viventium, & una eccleſia parens omnium Chriſtianor. Sicut illam maledictus Lamech in duas diviſit uxores, ſic hanc hæretici in plures eccleſias lacerant; quæ juxta Apocalypſin Johannis Synagogæ magis diaboli appellandæ ſunt, quàm Chriſti conciliabula.* Hieron. *ad* Geruntiam. *pag.* 92.

† *Eccleſia non eſt quæ non habet ſacerdotem.* Hieron. *adverſ. Luciferanos. p.* 491. *Eccleſia eſt grex Epiſcopo adunitus.* Cyprian. *ad* Rogatianum. *Epiſt.* 69.

Prayer and Impoſition of hands, as by Goſpel-Rules they ought to be, but are mere Lay-men that take upon them to preach and perform Miniſterial Duties, that were never called thereunto. This is true not onely in the aſſemblies of the Quakers, but of others alſo, by what name ſoever they may be called, that ſeparate from our Churches. I know it to be ſo in divers places. 2. Thoſe of them that were ordained, are (as to the execution of their Miniſtry committed to them in their Ordination during the time of their *Non-conformity*) under a legal ſuſpenſion by the higheſt and fulleſt Power and Authority of this Nation, to which we are all bound in Conſcience to be in Subjection. 3. Suppoſe that neither of the former were true, yet they are not true and lawfull Paſtors of thoſe that flock after them, ſeeing they have not the Paſtoral cure and care of the Souls of any of them committed to their charge by any that, under God, have Authority in the Church, but are commanded to contain themſelves in quietneſs and ſilence. And that they have no true and lawfull Flocks in their

their Congregations, appears in this, that their Assemblies & Congregations consist altogether of wandring Sheep that are gone astray from their own lawfull Pastors, and sinfully separated from the Congregations and Flocks, to which, of right, they belong, and gathered together into a Schismatical and separate meeting and Society, and so make up a Congregation of evil doers, and Synagogue of Satan. If this were rightly and seriously considered, I think it would startle the minds and shake the confidence of many of them, who bless themselves in their new-found way of Religion and Worship, boast of their number, and *compass Sea and Land to make Proselytes*, that at least, they might be equally *the Children of Hell with themselves*.

If they say our Church is corrupt, we have that amongst us that we should not have, or, not that which we ought to have, I say then,

First, Suppose it be so, (which I think will yet require more pains than have yet been bestowed, to prove) yet let them consider what *Peter Martyr* judiciously saith. * *Non ob quamcunq;*

* Pet. Mart. *loc. com. class.* 4. c. 1. s. 1.

cunq; maculam Chriſti Eccleſiam ita Excidere, ut Dei non amplius appelletur. Every little blemiſh in the face of a Church, cannot caſt her off from being God's. The Church in *Canticles* is ſaid to be * *fair as the Moon*; which in the *Hebrew* Tongue is called † לְבָנָה *Lebanah*, for her whiteneſs and bright ſhining: And yet the Moon is not ſo white, but ſtill ſome ſpots remain therein, and even uncapable of illumination from the Sun. || *Cælum ipſum nulla ſerenitas tam cõlata purgat, ut non alicujus nubeculæ flocculo reſignetur.* In the cleareſt Heaven ſome ſpecled Clouds may be diſcerned. * *Cum tota dicat Eccleſia quam diu hic eſt, dimitte nobis debita noſtra, non utiq; hic eſt ſine macula & ruga:* So long as the whole Church is commanded to ſay, whilſt ſhe is in this World, *forgive us our treſpaſſes*, ſhe cannot be imagined to be altogether without ſpot or wrinkle. Rather they diſcover themſelves to be moſt ſtained, to whom every ſmall ſpot in the Church ſeems to be altogether intolerable. † *Cum ſub ſpecie ſtudii perfectionis, imperfectionem nullam tolerare poſſumus, aut in corpore aut*

* Cant. 6. 10.

† Eſ. 24. 23.

|| Tertul. *l.* 1. *cap.* 3. *Cont. Nation.*

* Aug. *retract. l.* 1.

† Calv. *adver. Anabapt. art.* 2.

aut in membris Ecclesiæ, tum diabolum nos tumefacere superbia & hypocrisi seducere moneamur. When under colour of perfection, ye can endure no imperfection either in the body or members of the Church; you muſt be admoniſhed that this your ſeparation is cauſed by the Devil, who puffs you up with pride, and ſeduceth you by Hypocriſie.

Secondly, We may not upon every ſlight ground (to pleaſe a fond humour) leave the Society of God's People in the Church, *forſake the aſſembling of our ſelves together, as the manner of ſome is*, or goe off from Communion with that Church whereof we are, or ought to be Members. When an Ulcer breaks out in any part of the body (ſuppoſe the hand or the foot) muſt that member preſently be cut off, or not rather be cured and healed by the uſe of plaſters and other wholſome medicines, or the pain and evil be endured with patience until nature hath tryed her skill, and (as it will in ſhort time) conquered the malignity of the Diſtemper? And ſhall we then preſently make uſe of the

knife, as soon as ever there ariseth some diversity of opinions in the Church, especially in matters that are circumstantial in Religion? This were not Chirurgery, but Butchery. Nay, suppose the very substance and body of Religion were corrupted, and not only some light errours in circumstances were maintained, but there were Heresie in Doctrine also, in this case we ought to be very tender of making a *Schism*, and look well to our selves with what mind and affection we doe it. Suppose a Malefactor be really guilty and hath deserved to dye, yet if the Judge condemn him out of cruelty of mind, envy or spleen, and not out of true love to justice and hatred of his sin, though the Sentence were for the matter of it never so just, yet he were most unjust in pronouncing of it. So a separation from a Church though for just causes, yet would be most unjust and sinfull, if it be done out of malice or any evil respect or affection whatsoever. In such a case that is required of a Christian, which is required of a Chirurgeon, who when necessity forceth him to cut off a mem-

ber

ber, yet he doeth it unwillingly, with grief, and after trial of all lawfull ways and means to ſtop the evil, and to prevent the mutilation of the Patient. The property of true Chriſtian Charity, is, * *it rejoyceth not in iniquity, but in the truth.* That is iniquity which is ſo diametrically oppoſite to Charity, which the *Greeks* call ἐπιχαιρεκακία, which is a vice that makes men not onely to rejoyce in the Calamity of others, but greedily to ſuck in all evil reports of them, and rejoyce if they are true. Chriſtian Charity, where it is, works the ſame mind and affection in us towards our neighbour, as is in Parents towards their Children, who with joy admit of their commendation, but will not ſo eaſily believe any thing that tends to their diſparagement, unleſs they either ſee it with their eyes, or have good proof made for it; and then, not without grief of heart. Faults in a Church call for our lamentation, not ſeparation; ſhould God ſeparate from a Chriſtian Soul, becauſe there is ſtill ſome corruption of ſinfull nature remaining in it, the condition of us all would be moſt

* 1 Cor. 13. 6.

miſerable to Eternity. Did *Chriſt* ſeparate from the Church of the *Jews*, and not hold Communion with her, becauſe ſhe was not what ſhe had, or ought to have been? What the ſtate of the Jewiſh Church in our Saviour *Chriſt*'s time was, the Scriptures do abundantly ſhew. In it was a very
* Mat. 15. 14. ——23, 16. corrupt Miniſtry, * *blind leaders of the blind*. They preach'd well enough; but did not live accordingly. The High-Prieſts Office, which by God's Ordinance was to laſt during Life, was now become annual, and baſely bought
† Joh. 11. 49. and ſold † for money. The People were wicked, impenitent, haters and perſecutors of the Son of God. Their Doctrine was much corrupted and blended
‖ Mat. 5. 20, ——48. with falſe and *Phariſaical* ‖ *gloſſes*. Many ſuperſtitious Ceremonies were
* Mar. 7. 9. uſed, and urged more ſtrictly * than any of God's Commandments. Church-
† Joh. 9. 22. diſcipline very much perverted. † *The Jews had agreed that if any did profeſs Chriſt, he ſhould be excommunicated.* An horrible abuſe was crept into the place of God's Service: *A Market*, and
‖ Mat. 21. 12. Joh. 2. 14. ‖ *Money-changing* ſet up in the *Temple of God*. And yet for all this our Saviour

viour made no ſeparation from this corrupt Church, but communicated with them in all parts of Divine Worſhip. In his Infancy he was admitted a Member of that Church * by *Circumciſion*. At the *Purification* he was preſented before the Lord in that Church, and † a *Sacrifice offered for him according to the Law of* Moſes. When he came to riper years he conſtantly kept the Church, came ‖ to the Congregation to Divine Service, publick Prayers, and reading the Scriptures. He received the Sacraments in their Church. * *Baptiſm*, and † the *Paſſover*. Yea his conformity to the *Jewiſh* Church was not onely in Divine Inſtitutions, but in Humane alſo; as in his obſervation of the Feaſt of the *Dedication* of the Temple (mentioned *Joh.* 10.) doth appear. He was ſo far from breaking the order or cuſtome of that Church, as that he conformed to it in thoſe things that were contrary to Divine Inſtitutions. It was the ordinance of God that the *Paſſover* ſhould be eaten by the *Jews* ‖ *with their loyns girded, their ſhooes on their feet, and their ſtaves in their hands becauſe they*

* Luk. 2. 21.
† Luk. 2. 22, ——— 23.
‖ Luk. 2. 46. ——— 3. 21. ——— 4. 16.
* Luk. 3. 21.
† Joh. 2. 13.
‖ Exod. 12 11.

were to eat it in haſte. Standing was a poſture of readineſs for travell; and they uſed long Garments in thoſe Countries, which would have been an hindrance to them, if they had not been truſſed up. The Apoſtle ſeems to allude to this cuſtome, when he ſaith
* Eph. 6. 14. * *ſtand therefore having your loyns girded about.* But becauſe the Church of the *Jews*, being now ſafely eſcaped out of *Egypt*, had by long cuſtome omitted and altered theſe Ceremonies, therefore our Saviour *Chriſt* would not break or alter the cuſtome of that Church, but did as they did. He did not *ſtand* at the *Paſſover*, but *ſate* or uſed a leaning poſture (for ſo the word ἀνακεῖσθαι, uſed by St. *Matthew* doth ſignifie) as
† Mat. 26. 20. appears by the Evangeliſt. † *When the even was come he ſate down with the twelve.* And all this to teach us that we ought to be tender of violating the
‖ 1 Cor. 11. 16. ‖ *cuſtomes* of the *Church*; not to grow into a prophane contempt or neglect of any part of publick worſhip, for every imperfection and blemiſh, nor to ſeparate from a Church, though never ſo corrupt, ſo long as the Word, Sacraments, and Doctrine of Salvation may there be enjoyed.

Cor-

Corruptions of a Church are commonly by Divines distinguished into two sorts. They are either such as concern the matter of Religion, which the Apostle calls * *damnable Heresies*, in fundamental points of Faith and Holiness, which tend to the destroying of the very being of a Church. Or else such as concern the manner of Religion in circumstantials and ceremonials, which are matters of lower concern, and inferiour alloy: Such as (to use the words of Learned Bp. *Davenant*) *Non continuo ad fidem fundamentalem spectant* † *sed ad peritiam theologicam, & fortasse ne ad hanc quidem, sed aliquando ad curiositatem theologorum*: belong not to the fundamentals of faith, but skilfulness in Divinity, and not to that neither, but rather to the curiosity of Divines.

* 2 Pet. 2. 2.

† Dav. *exhort. ad pacem. p.* 29.

Now errours, even in fundamentals, may be in a Church upon a double account, || either through infirmity and humane frailty, the best of us knowing but in part in this Life: God allows no separation in such a case. The Church of *Galatia* through infirmity, was quickly turned to another

|| Bp. Hall.

Gos-

Goſpel, and erred even in matters fundamental, holding juſtification by works, and was fallen to the obſervation of *Jewiſh* Ceremonies, which St. *Paul* calls *beggarly Elements*. Their Apoſtle was become their *Enemy*, and that *for telling them the truth*. He was afraid of them, *leſt all the labour he had beſtowed amongſt them, was in vain, and was fain to travel in birth with them again*; yet he owns them, and writes to them as a Church notwithſtanding. Or elſe, *vitioſo affectu inmorigeræ voluntatis*, out of malice, when men know they doe amiſs, and yet perſiſt obſtinately in ſo doing. In ſuch a caſe ſeparation may be with a good Conſcience. When St. *Paul* had preach'd in the Synagogue of the *Jews*, and they would not believe, but began to blaſpheme and ſpeak evil of the ways of God, * then he withdrew and ſeparated from them. So that it muſt be no ſmall matter, that muſt be a ſufficient ground to any one that means to keep a good Conſcience, to warrant his withdrawing from the publick Congregation in any part of God's worſhip.

* Act. 19. 9. 1 Tim. 6. 3, 5. Hoſ. 4. 15. Rev. 18. 4. *vid.* Maſoni *vindic. miniſterii. Angl. p.* 167.

If

If a man have not diſcretion, he may eaſily run himſelf into a great evil of ſin, whilſt he ſeeks to ſhun a light inconvenience; and in avoiding that which he thinks to be ſuperſtition, he may ſoon become really *Schiſmatical* and prophane, which is * *as if a man did flee from a Lion and a Bear met him, or went into the houſe and leaned his hand on the wall, and a Serpent bit him.* Suppoſe there were ſome evil mixtures in our adminiſtration of Church-worſhip, yet (in the judgment of the *Presbyterian* Divines themſelves) this is not a ſufficient ground of a *negative*, much leſs of a *poſitive* ſeparation. For (ſay they †) "the learned "Authour before mentioned (that is *Camero*) tells us that corruption in "manners crept into a Church, is not "a ſufficient cauſe of ſeparation from "it. This he proves from *Matt.* 23. "2, 3. And he alſo gives this reaſon "for it: Becauſe in what Church ſoever there is purity of Doctrine, "there God hath his Church, though "overwhelmed with ſcandals. And "therefore *whoſoever ſeparateth from "ſuch an Aſſembly, ſeparateth from that*

* Amos. 5. 19.

† *Vindicat. of Presbyt. p.* 116, 117.

"*place*

" *place where God hath his Church, which*
" *is rash and unwarrantable.* And in the
" next Page, they say: He that will
" never communicate with any Church,
" till every thing that offendeth be re-
" moved out of it, must tarry till the
" great day of Judgment, when (and
" not till then) *Christ* will send forth
" his Angels and gather out of his
" Kingdom every thing that offendeth,
" and them that doe iniquity. And
though to excuse themselves from the
guilt of Schism, they that do separate
may pretend, that they make not an
open breach of Christian Love, where-
in the nature of that great sin doth
consist. Let their own words answer
themselves, * " We grant that to make
" up the formality of a *Schismatick*,
" there must be added *uncharitableness*,
" as to make up the formality of an
" *Heretick* there must be added *obsti-*
" *nacy*: But yet, as he that denieth a
" fundamental Article of Faith, is guil-
" ty of *Heresie* though he add not *ob-*
" *stinacy* thereunto to make him an
" *Heretick*; so he that doth *unwarran-*
" *tably separate* from a true Church,
" is truly guilty of *Schism*, though he

" add

* *Vindicat. of Presbyt. p.* 118.

" add not *uncharitableneſs* thereunto,
" to denominate him a complete *Schiſ-*
" *matick*. How unjuſtifiable then is the ſeparation, which ſome make themſelves and cauſe others to make, in theſe days from our Churches, which in their Conſtitution, for *Doctrine*, *Diſcipline* and *Worſhip* are the envy of *Rome*, and the admiration of the reſt of the Chriſtian World: where there is nothing Idolatrous in *Worſhip*, nothing Heretical in *Doctrine*, nor Antiſcriptural in *Diſcipline*; where there is nothing taught, believed, or done, but what is agreeable with the word of God, or not contrary thereunto: And (to ſpeak in the words of the learned and godly Dr. *Henry More*) * a
" Church ſo throughly purged from
" whatſoever can properly be ſtyled
" Antichriſtian, and is, I am confident,
" ſo Apoſtolical, that the Apoſtles
" themſelves, if they were alive again,
" would not have the leaſt ſcruple of
" joyning in publick worſhip with us
" in our common Aſſemblies. Separation from it, can be no leſs than the fruit of Pride or bitter Zeal, which tends to ſtrife, † *And where envy and*

* *Inquiry into the myſtery of iniquity. p.* 561.

† Jam. 3. 16.

ſtrife

ſtrife is, there is confuſion and every evil work.

I have heard ſome Church-forſakers, when they have been told of their Apoſtaſie and falling off from the Church whereof they were Members, excuſe and pleaſe themſelves in this, that they are not Apoſtates from the Faith, they hold the ſame Doctrine, and believe the ſame Creed we do. Though in that they doe no more than Papiſts doe.

But in the mean time they conſider not. That,

1. This is an improvement and aggravation of their ſin, (ſo far is it from excuſing the fault) to depart from a Church wherein they were born and baptized, and which (by their own confeſſion) continues ſound in the Faith. Separation is allowed by no Divines (no not by the * *Presbyterians* themſelves) but either in caſe of *cruel Perſecution, damnable Hereſie*, or *downright Idolatry*. They then that ſeparate from a Church where there is neither of theſe, have the greater ſin.

* Dr. Manton *on* Jude 12. *p.* 496.

2. That the hainouſneſs of the ſin of *Schiſm* doth not conſiſt in renoun-

cing

cing the Faith, but in the breach of Christian Charity, without which † *all Faith is nothing*. A man may be very Orthodox in his Judgment, and yet be a damnable *Schismatick* if he break that Union which ought to be religiously kept amongst Christians, in God's worship especially. And because this breach is manifestly perfected in refusing due Ecclesiastical Communion together, therefore that separation is κατ' ἐξοχὴν, called *Schism*. † 1 Cor. 13. 2.

3. That the breach of the bond of Charity is equally as dangerous and damnable, as Apostasie from the Faith; and as destructive and inconsistent to the nature and being of the Church one as the other.

4. What sufficient convincing proof can our Church-forsakers make, that they are not faln from the true Faith, as well as from Christian Charity, seeing they are subdivided into so many several Parties and Sects, some whereof (and not the smallest number, *viz.* the *Quakers*) are totally apostatized from all Christianity; others are faln in part, as the *Anabaptists*, *Antinomians*, &c. And those of them that do now and then

come

come to Church (perhaps becauſe they cannot tell how to diſpoſe of themſelves otherwiſe) ſtudiouſly abſent themſelves from the profeſſion of our Faith contained in the Creeds; and if any of them chance to be there at that time, yet they willfully refuſe to obſerve and obey that godly and laudable command and cuſtome of the Church, grounded on good authority of God's word, *to ſtand up to their Belief.*

5. If they are not yet quite faln from the Faith, yet their *Schiſm* and departure from the Church, * is a fair ſtep towards it; where are they likely to ſtay (unleſs God marvellouſly ſtop them) who are departed from his houſe? The Prodigal Son's leaving his Father's Family was the firſt ſtep to all that lewd courſe of Life that afterwards he took. The *Donatiſts* of old, did not at firſt diſſent in matters of Faith from the *Catholick* Church, but their *Schiſm* did ſoon produce *Hereſie*; as an Ulcer or Wound being inflamed doth ſoon beget a Fever. In the mean time whatever they eſteem themſelves, or are eſteemed of others to be, they are indeed

* *Omne Schiſma, ubi progreſſu temporis inveteratum fuerit, Hæreſin aliquam ſibi confingit, ut recte ab Eccleſia receſſiſſe videatur.* Maſon *vindic. miniſterii Anglic. p.* 163.

indeed no more true Members of the Church, than Tares or Chaff are part of the Wheat, or than Mutineers are part of an Army. * *Hæretici & Schismatici non sunt ex vera Ecclesia, sed tantummodo Ecclesiæ immisti, sicut & excrementa sunt quidem in corpore, sed non de corpore.* Alsted. *Lexic. Theol.* p. 359.

* Camero. *tract. in quo eccl. Rom. pre. ad. exam. c. 14.*

Now whilst I write these things, I weep: *mine eye, mine eye, runneth down with water*; I cannot refrain my self but must cry out, alas, alas, for my dear mother the poor distressed, distracted, and divided Church of *England*; I will bewail thee with the weeping of *Jazer, I will water thee with my tears, my bowels shall sound like a harp for thee, and my inward parts like pipes.* That thine own Children, like *Jacob* and *Esau*, should so jar and disagree in their Womb, as to endanger the very life of her that bore them, by their struggling. What, Brethren, have we not all one God, one *Christ*, one Spirit, one Baptism, one Scripture, one hope of Eternal Salvation? And can we not close and communicate together in the Worship and Service, of that one blessed

Quæ gens, quæ regio tulit tam multa dictu gravia, pertessu aspera quam hodie nos? Non enim partes solum inter nos sunt, sed partium (ô patria quæ salus te servet?) novæ partes. Just. Lipsius. *de constant. l. 2. c. 20.*

ſed Creator, merciſull Saviour, and moſt ſweet Comforter? Are our differences about I know not what, grown to ſuch an height, that we cannot *goe to Church* together, joyn in one confeſſion of Sin, profeſſion of Faith, Prayer, each with, and for other, hear the ſame Scriptures read and preached, and ſit together at the ſame Table, partake of that ſame heavenly Feaſt, to which we are altogether moſt lovingly invited?

Dij talia Graiis, erroremq; hoſtibus illum.

So great is the crime of our preſent Age in this, that Poſterity ſhall never be able to add to it. *Oh tell it not in* Gath, *publiſh it not in the Streets of* Aſhcalon, *leſt the Daughters of the Philiſtines rejoyce, leſt the Daughters of the uncircumciſed triumph.* What will very *Pagans* ſay, when they ſhall ſee Chriſtians thus divided? As *Clement Alexandrinus* brings in the Heathen exprobrating our Religion for untrue, * *Quia omnis ſecta Chriſtianiſmi titulum ſibi vendicat, tamen alia aliam execratur & condemnat*; becauſe every Sect challengeth to it ſelf the Title of true Chriſtianity, yet one curſeth and condemneth another. What can they

* Clem. Alex. Strom. l. 7.

otherwiſe think, but that the God and *Chriſt* whom we all pretend to ſerve, is (what he abhors to be) the authour of confuſion? Oh what Muſick is this in the Ears of *Papiſts* to hear of our diſcords? Did *Herod* and *Pontius Pilate* agree as friends to crucifie *Chriſt*, and ſhall Chriſtians that profeſs themſelves to be his Members, diſagree as mortal Enemies, about their Service of him? Oh *Religion, Religion!* Haſt thou not Enemies enough abroad in the World, that ſeek thy deſtruction, but thy *deadlieſt wound muſt be received in the houſe of thy friend!* Like *Joſeph* thou art baſely ſold by thine own Brethren, when thou art bringing them neceſſary food: like *Sampſon*, thou art betray'd into the hands of the *Philiſtines* by thoſe that pretend zeal for thee; and like thy bleſſed Maſter, thou art delivered up to thy mortal Foes, by thine own treacherous Diſciples: what Ocean can furniſh mine eyes with tears enough to pour out, for the ſcandal and matter of rejoycing, that theſe things do give to thine adverſaries; and for thy much feared ruine that this portends! Alas, Alas, that thoſe who pretend

much tenderneſs in leſſer matters, ſhould make no Conſcience at all of endeavouring thy Preſervation and Proſperity, by *keeping the unity of the Spirit in the bond of Peace*! What ſhall I ſay of thoſe Men, but as our Saviour of his Enemies, *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they doe.* The Lord open their eyes that they may ſee, and *perſwade* Japhet *to dwell in the Tents of* Shem.

Oh all ye my Brethren, that make an unchriſtian ſeparation from the Society of your Chriſtian Friends and Neighbours in the publick worſhip of God, eſpecially you, to whom I ſtand neareſt related, I beſeech you in the bowels of our common Saviour, do not thus give advantage to the adverſaries of our Religion, to endeavour and hope for the ſpeedy overthrow both of us and it; and in the mean time to laugh in their ſleeves at our diviſions, ſaying, *there, there, ſo would we have it.* * *I beſeech you, Brethren, in the name of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, that ye all ſpeak the ſame thing, and that there be no Schiſms amongſt you, that ye be perfectly joyned together in the ſame mind,*

* 1 Cor. 1. 10.

mind, and in the ſame judgment. † *If there be any Conſolation in* Chriſt, *if any comfort of Love, if any fellowſhip of the Spirit, if there be any bowels of Mercies, fulfill ye my joy, that ye be like minded, having the ſame love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through ſtrife or vain glory, but in lowlineſs of mind let each eſteem other better than themſelves.* † Phil. 2. 1, 3.

It is promiſed as a bleſſed Fruit of the Goſpel, ‖ *the envy of* Ephraim *ſhall ceaſe, and the adverſaries of* Judah *ſhall be cut off*; Ephraim *ſhall not envy* Judah, *and* Judah *ſhall not vex* Ephraim; *but they ſhall fly upon the ſhoulders of the Philiſtines, toward the* Weſt, *they ſhall ſpoil them of the* Eaſt *together, they ſhall lay their hands upon* Edom *and* Moab, *and the Children of* Ammon *ſhall obey them.* Oh that all animoſity and prejudice were baniſhed from the borders of our hearts, that ſo meeting together by Troops (with primitive Concord *) in the publick places of our Aſſemblies, being banded together with a kind of holy Violence, we may with one mind and one mouth, lay Seige to the throne ‖ Eſ. 11. 13, 14.

* *Coimus in cœtum & congregationem, ut ad Deum quaſi manu factâ precationibus ambiamus orantes.* Tertul. *Apol.* c. 39.

of Grace, and give God no reſt (ſuch Forces are to him moſt acceptable) till he fulfill this gracious promiſe, that we periſh not in our diviſions.

Lord grant that all they that confeſs thy holy name, may agree in the truth of thy holy word, and live in unity and godly love through Jeſus Chriſt. Amen.

ARGUMENT. IV.

THat cannot be the Ordinance of God, conducing to the Salvation of Souls, which is not onely contrary to good and wholſome Laws; deſtructive to Goſpel-Order; and deſtitute of Divine Promiſe; but is alſo contrary to Goſpel-commands. For God is not contradictory to himſelf, inſtituting or ordaining that in one place of his word, which he forbids in another; but throughout the whole Scripture he reveals one conſtant, and one uninterrupted Tenor of ſacred truth.

But

But the practice in question is contrary to sundry Gospel-commands; as will easily be made out by instancing in two or three, instead of others.

The first I shall mention is that in St. *Peter* * *Let none of you suffer as a Murtherer, or as a Thief, or as an evil doer, or as a busie-body in other Mens Matters.* The word in the Original is ἀλλοτριεπίσκοπος, which in the proper and genuine construction of it, signifies † a busie Bishop in another Man's Dioceſs; or a busie Presbyter in another Man's Pariſh, that takes upon him to meddle in another Man's Cure, and to be doing in matters that are committed to another Man's Charge; that is ſo well at leiſure, and hath ſo little to doe of his own, that (according to the Proverb) *He thruſts his Sickle into another Man's Harveſt.*

* 1 Pet. 4. 15.

† *Alienorum inſpector, ſive curator. Compoſita vox ab alieno & Epiſcopo.* Eraſm. *in loc.*

The Apoſtle reckons ſuch a one among *Murtherers* and *Thieves*, and other *evil doers*, that ſo he may eaſily be known what he is, by ſuch as the Holy Ghoſt ſorts with him. Now *Murtherers* and *Thieves* and other *Malefactors* are made the Companions of ſuch, who without a ſpecial conceſſion,

or commiſſion, undertake to meddle in other Mens Pariſhes, with the Souls not committed to their Care and Charge; and the Apoſtle gives equal Caveat againſt them all.

I know not therefore how ſuch buſie-bodies can acquit themſelves of the other two ſins alſo mentioned in this black roll. Of the latter, their guilt ſeems to be too evident, in taking up wandring *Sheep* from their Folds, when they ought rather to ſend them home to their own *Shepherds*: in ſetting their *mark* upon them, owning them for *theirs*, and calling them by the name of *their Church*, when as in truth they have no more Property or Intereſt in them, than the Emperour of *Utopia* hath in the *Pleiades*: or the poor *Athenian*, in *Horace*, had in the Ships which he ſaw on the Sea, and called his own, though he had no other right to them, than what his extravagant and diſtempered fancy did create. For what warrant have they to meddle with other Mens Flocks?

Of the former, (I fear alſo) they will ſcarce be found altogether guiltleſs. For truly the Souls of their Proſelytes,

after they have been their followers a while, ſeem to be ſo mortally poiſoned with *Schiſm* and *Separation*, *profane contempt* and *neglect* of the *publick worſhip* and *ordinances* of God, with *deſpiſing* of all *Authority*, good *Laws*, and *Government*, and many other dangerous evils; and ſo *metamorphoſed*, that from being *Sheep* (as before they ſeemed to be) they turn *Wolves*, and are ready to worry their own *Shepherds*: as is found true by too ſad experience in all places where theſe men intrude themſelves.

The Apoſtle doth elſewhere reckon up *idleneſs*, as another Companion of this ſin. * *They learn to be idle, wandring about from houſe to houſe, and are buſie-bodies.* Again, † *Working not at all, but are buſie-bodies.* And indeed this is the Root from whence this vice ſprings. 'Tis true (in the former place) the Apoſtle makes it *muliebre vitium*, the womens ſin; but it is no wonder to ſee idlers of the other Sex alſo, to become effeminate, and medlers in other folks matters, when they have none of their own to be doing about. An idler is well at leiſure, and

* 1 Tim. 5. 13.

† 2 Theſ. 3. ——— 11.

if

if he will not ſerve God in his own ſtation, rather than he ſhall doe nothing, Satan will find him employment, in ſetting him to thruſt his Sickle into his Neighbours Corn. * *They made me keeper of the Vineyards, but mine own Vineyard have I not kept.* Here are *Vineyards* oppoſed to *her own Vineyard*; falſe Churches, to true. For † *The Vineyard of the Lord of Hoſts, is the houſe of* Iſrael, *and the men of* Judah *his pleaſant Plant.* When men keep not their *own Vineyard*, the keeping whereof is committed to them of God, *the Spirit that works in the Children of diſobedience*, will ſet them to plant and keep Vineyards of his, || *The Vine whereof is the Vine of* Sodom, *and of the Fields of* Gomorrah; *their Grapes are Grapes of Gall, their cluſters are bitter.* What account theſe *Huſbandmen* will make hereafter, to him that is the Lord of the Vineyard, for ſuch kind of dealing, I wiſh they may in time ſeriouſly conſider, e'er it be too late ſo to doe.

* Cant. 1. 6.

† Eſ. 5. 7.

‖ Deut. 32. 32, 33.

Neither may we omit to obſerve how the Apoſtle in the afore quoted place, doth (as it were) unchriſtian ſuch

ſuch a buſie Perſon, and ſeems to make him no better than a *Pagan* or Infidel. For he puts a vaſt difference betwixt the ſufferings of a *buſie Presbyter*, and thoſe of a *Chriſtian*. * *If a Chriſtian ſuffer, let him not be aſhamed, but let him glorify God in this behalf.* But if ſuch a *buſie-body* ſuffer (as 'tis as much pity he ſhould goe ſcotfree as any of his Mates in the Text) he hath as great cauſe to be aſhamed as a *Thief* or a *Murtherer*.

* 1 Pet. 4. 15, ——16.

The Second Goſpel-command I ſhall inſtance in, is that of St. *Paul* to the *Theſſalonians*. † *Study to be quiet, and doe your own buſineſs.* Quietneſs is here enjoyned under the notion and quality of an Art or Science; for we are commanded to ſtudy it. || φιλοτιμεῖσθαι ἡσυχάζειν, ſeek with an holy ambition, thinking it an honour to live in peace. The quietneſs there commended to our ambitious endeavour, I conceive, to import, not a quietneſs from motion, but from commotion or troubling of others; a contented calm converſation, oppoſite to tumultuous turbulence, and reſtleſs intermedling with things where-

† 1 Theſ. 4. ——11.

|| *Proprie eſt honoris conſequendi gratia anniti.* Piſcat. *in loc.*

in

in others are concerned. But how ſhall we attain to be maſters of this Art of quietneſs? The means moſt available that way, the Apoſtle preſcribes in the next words, τὰ ἴδια πράσσειν, to doe our own buſineſs, letting other mens matters alone to themſelves. For a man then not to content himſelf with his own affairs, but to mix himſelf with other mens; and without any lawfull appointment or allowance, to thruſt himſelf into another's Place and Employment, is contrary to that quietneſs which Chriſtians are to ſtudy, a manifeſt breach of this great Goſpel-command, and conſequently inconſiſtent with the ordinance of God.

A Third Evangelical precept, is that of our bleſſed Saviour. * *Whatſoever ye would that men ſhould doe unto you, doe ye even ſo to them.* It is a principle both natural and divine, enjoyned by our heavenly Law-giver, as a ground and rule of all equity amongſt men. *Lactantius* thus comments on it: *Radix & omnis fundamentum æquitatis eſt illud: vide ut ne facias ulli quod pati nolis, ſed alterius animum de tuo metieris.* This is the root and foundation of all equity

* Mat. 7. 12.

Sic cum unoquoq; agas tanquam tu illius indueris perſonam, ille tuam. Hierocles *apud* Stobæum. *Serm.* 84.

for

for a man to be carefull not to doe that to another, which he would not ſuffer himſelf; but to meaſure another man's mind by his own.

Now I appeal to the hearts and conſciences of thoſe Miniſters, that thruſt themſelves now into other mens Congregations and Pariſhes, and there in private houſes gather together a company of diſciples and followers of the more giddy and unſtable ſort of People, (for ſuch they are for the moſt part, that not content with the publick labours of their own Paſtors, flock to private Conventicles) and ſet up a courſe of Preaching and other Miniſterial Acts: whether, if they were Paſtors of Congregations (as ſometimes they were) and had a charge of a flock of God's People committed to them (for whoſe Souls they and none elſe, muſt be accountable) they would take it well, or permit it (if they could otherwiſe help it) that a ſtranger ſhould thruſt himſelf into their Pariſhes, and lead away a number of their People to private Aſſemblies in corners, to a dependence on them for teaching, and other duties, which they obtrude upon

upon them as the worſhip and ſervice of God, even to the forſaking and loathing of that, which is publickly eſtabliſhed, for waiting on them in private? And whether, when thoſe men were in their Paſtoral charges, and in the late time, *Anabaptiſts*, *Familiſts*, and other *Sectaries*, did the like, as they themſelves now doe, (ſet up private Conventicles in ſeveral Towns and Pariſhes) they did not account themſelves much injured thereby, and made their Pulpits ſound loud againſt it, nay, oppoſe it by all means they poſſibly could? Which is a truth ſufficiently known to all that have been hearers of them, or know their practices.

Neither will it ſuffice them to ſay, thoſe whom they then oppoſed were Perſons heterodox in their judgments, and corrupt in their opinions. For,

Quicunq; malis vitam maculaverit actis, Ad tenebras pavidus refugit, ne lumineclaro Sordida pollutæ pateant contagia mentis. Juven. *l.* 2.

1. So may theſe Houſe-creeping Preachers be alſo, for ought any one knows. If it be ſound Divinity they Preach, it is avowable, and publication is a fair Argument of truth. Truth ſeeks no corners: it is onely aſhamed to be hidden; as the Sun to be clouded or eclipſed. The deſire of Secreſie and Privacy

Privacy renders their Doctrines ſuſpicious of falſhood and errour. In the dark, groſs faults are not perceived; and they are evil-doers onely that are laid by our Saviour * *to hate the light.* While men doe nothing but well, they need not conceal and hide their doings. "The very Heathen (as a Divine of "ours obſerves) did worſhip their "Gods *ſub dio*, without Roofs or Co- "verings † in a free openneſs; and "where they could, in Temples made "with Specular Stone, that was tran- "ſparent as Criſtal, ſo as that they "that walked without in the Streets, "might ſee all that was done within. "And even nature it ſelf taught the na- "tural man, to make that an Argument "of a man truly Religious, *aperto vi- "vere voto*; that he durſt pray aloud, "and let the world hear what he aſ- "ked at God's hands, which duty "(ſaith he) is beſt performed when "we joyn with the Congregation in "publick Prayers. St. *Auſtin* hath "made that note upon the *Donatiſts* "that they were clanculary, clande- "ſtine Divines, Divines in corners. "And in *Photius* we have ſuch a note "almoſt

* 1 Joh. 3. 20.

† *Dr.* Don.

† *Honeſta ſemper publico gaudent, ſcelera ſecreta ſunt. Cur nunquam palam loqui, nunquam libere congregari ſuſtinent, niſi illud quod colunt, aut puniendum eſt aut pudendum.*

" almoſt upon all Hereticks; as the
" *Neſtorian* was called *Coluber*, a Snake,
" becauſe though he kept in the Gar-
" den, in the Church, he lurked and
" lay hid to doe miſchief. And truly
ſo long as the Preaching of the Goſpel
is not perſecuted, and there is no pro-
* 2 Chron. 28. 24. Act. 16. 6. hibition to the contrary, as (* ſome-
times there was) it ſeems to me to be
contrary to the very nature of it (here-
in differing from the Law, that it is
not confined to any one Nation or
† 2 Tim. 2. 9. Place, nor is ſubject to († *bonds* or
reſtraint) to be ſhut up in private hou-
ſes, and taught in ſecret, and not ra-
ther to be publiſhed in Churches and
open Places of free and common reſort.
‖ Act. 5. 20. The command to the Apoſtles was ‖ *Go
ſtand and ſpeak in the Temple to the Peo-
ple all the words of this Life.* And ac-
cordingly was their Practice, *Act.* 9. 20.
Act. 13. 14. 44. 'Tis true the godly in
times paſt, had their private Meetings,
in *Deſerts*, *Mountains*, *Dens*, and *Caves*
of the *Earth*. But the caſe is not alike
with us, as with them. The times then
were of moſt bloudy Perſecution, when
neither Preacher nor Profeſſour eſcaped
the Fire; and therefore were enforced
to

to conceal themſelves, and privately to enjoy thoſe Comforts, and diſcharge thoſe Duties and Exerciſes of Religion, which they could not publickly be ſuffered to doe. But thoſe who ſet up and frequent private Meetings now, may enjoy the preaching and reading of the Word, prayers to God, confeſſion of Sin, profeſſion of Faith, and benefit of the Sacraments, in the publick Aſſemblies of the Saints: Yea, they are not onely allowed, but commanded by Authority ſo to doe, but they will not. Thoſe Teachers then that in theſe *Halcion* days of the Goſpel creep into corners to vent their Doctrines, diſcover themſelves to be, either,

Firſt, Seditious and Schiſmatical, ſeeking to make Parties and Diviſions in the Church. Or,

Secondly, Proud and Arrogant, preferring their own Opinions and Doctrines, Aſſemblies and Perſons, before all other. Or,

Thirdly, Falſe and Erroneous; for all *damnable Hereſies*, and Doctrines of Perdition, which pervert and deſtroy Souls, are thus brought in under-

2 Pet. 2. 1. hand *privily*, by ſuch as *creep* into the Church of God by ſtealth. At leaſt, they are deſtitute of that means of juſtification and defence of the truth, which our Saviour *Chriſt* had, and which all *Chriſt*'s Miniſters in a ſetled Church ought to have, *viz.* to *appeal to the publick Audience.* * That which is publickly Preached, may be proved and tryed, but not ſo well that which is taught in obſcurity.

* Joh. 18. 21.

2. What the Judgments and Opinions of theſe Men have been, and that in all thoſe things wherein the Peace of the Church, and the Salvation of Souls of Chriſtians are concerned, I mean the *Doctrine*, *Diſcipline*, and *Worſhip*, as it ſtands eſtabliſhed in the *Church of England*, the World hath had ſufficient knowledge and experience, by the late bloudy Wars and Perſecutions raiſed thereabout.

3. Laſtly, The queſtion is not (as hath been ſaid) *de facto*, what Doctrine theſe men deliver in their private Conventions, but *de jure*, what right they have to Preach any, in other Mens Pariſhes, as they doe.

Such

Such a Perſon then, whoſoever he be, that doeth that to others, which he would not have done to himſelf, nay, which he hath oppoſed and diſliked in others, is (as the Apoſtle calls him) αὐτοκατάκριτος, * *condemned of himſelf*, as ſinning wittingly, and wilfully ſpurning againſt a known truth ſparkling and ſhining in his Conſcience. The waiting on ſuch Mens Miniſtry is ſo far from being the Ordinance of God, that he commands all men to † avoid them.

* Tit. 3. 11.

† Tit. 3. 10.

ARGUMENT. V.

THat cannot be the Ordinance of God for the working of Grace, that hath no Scripture Preſident, or warrantable Example, to ground it on. For all the Ordinances of God, of this kind, beſides his Mandate, have alſo their exemplification in Scripture, God (ordinarily) working Grace in the hearts of Men, then, as he doth now.

But this private and houſe-preaching, by an intruder, in a conſtituted Church, where there is a Preaching Miniſter eſtabliſhed, hath none.

I deny not, but it may be lawfull in ſome Caſes, to have all the parts of God's Worſhip uſed in a private Houſe. As,

1. In caſe of infirmity of Body, when People are not able to come to Church. Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory tells us, that in the primitive times, divers of the new converted Chriſtians were Baptized, ſome in Priſon; as appears in the ſtory of *Baſilides* in * *Euſebius*. And the ſick in their beds; as † *Cyprian* declares at large. And if any were hindered by Sickneſs that they could not partake of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper with the Church, it was ſent home to them by a Prieſt or Deacon, if it might be; if not by ſome other. As appears by the example of *Serapion*, in an Epiſtle of *Dionyſius* Biſhop of *Alexandria*, to *Fabius*. ||

* *L. 6. c. 5.*

† *Epiſt. ad Magnum.*

|| Euſeb. *l. 6. c. 44.*

2. In time of Perſecution, when the doors of God's Houſe are ſhut up againſt us, ſo as that we cannot have free acceſs to it, or liberty to joyn together with the Congregation in Prayers, hearing the Word, and receiving the Sacraments; as it was in the days of King * *Ahaz*. Thus *Victor* reports that

* 2 Chron. 28. 24.

that in the Perſecution by the *Vandals*, the Congregations of Chriſtians in *Africa*, being through the vaſtations of War deprived of their Churches, did hold their Aſſemblings together for Divine Worſhip, whereever they could. And the ſame Authour tells us, that becauſe of the rage of the *Arian* Hereticks, the Orthodox Chriſtians had their Meetings in private Houſes. Or in ſuch other like Caſes of ſpecial neceſſity.

Yet our Saviour *Chriſt* in the *Jewiſh* Church, as, before he was a Preacher, his cuſtome was to frequent the publick Aſſembly in * the *Synagogue every Sabbath-day*; ſo, after he ſet upon the execution of that Function, he never uſed to Preach privately in Houſes. Hear what he ſaith himſelf, when the High-Prieſt asked him of his Diſciples and Doctrine, † *Jeſus anſwered him, I ſpake openly to the World: I ever taught in the Synagogue and in the Temple, whither the Jews always reſort, and in ſecret have I ſaid nothing.* His words are plain; yet becauſe with ſome Men, Fancy and Affection do prevail over their Judgments and Reaſon (accor-

* Luk. 4. 16.

† Joh. 18. 19, ——— 20. Matt. 26. 55.

* Aug. *cont.* Julian. *l.* 1.

ding to that ſaying of St. *Auſtin*, * *periit ſiquidem judicium, poſtquam res tranſiit in affectum; & noſtram qualemcunq; quia noſtra jam facta eſt, prævalere volumus ſententiam*) Therefore I ſhall endeavour to clear the truth of our Saviour's Speech in that ſaying of his to the High-Prieſt; and ſhew, that he was always a publick orderly Preacher, and never a private irregular *Conventicler*. And though the contrary could be proved, yet it would make nothing for the irregular Practice of ſome in this Age whom I am diſputing againſt, ſeeing the queſtion is of ſuch Perſons onely, as have an *ordinary* calling to the Miniſtry (whereas our Saviour *Chriſt*'s was *extraordinary*) in a ſetled Goſpel-Church (whereas the *Jewiſh*-Church was in *Chriſt*'s time expiring, and the Goſpel-Church beginning,) and are intruders into other Mens Charges and Congregations, as our Saviour neither was, nor could be, ſeeing he was the ſupreme Lord of his Church, and *Heir of all things*.

In thoſe words of his, Firſt (ſaith he) I ſpake παῤῥησία, openly. The word properly ſignifies freedom and liberty

liberty of Speech; which *Piſcator* thus explains * *Cum quis omne id dicit quod ad rem pertinet, nihil veritus offenſionem eorum, quibuſcum loquitur.* When a Man ſpeaks that which properly pertains to the matter in hand, not fearing though it offend thoſe to whom he ſpeaks. Oftentimes in Scripture it ſignifies, *openly*. And in this place *Tremelius* renders it by *apertè*, and *Beza* by *palam*; both *openly*. So that our Saviour profeſſeth here, that his Doctrine, as it was heavenly truth, and delivered without fear of danger, or hatred of Men, or perſecution of the World; ſo not in a Corner or *Conventicle*, but *openly* and in publick.

* Piſcat. *in* 1 Theſ. 2. 2.

Secondly, *I ſpake* (ſaith he) not to a few Select Perſons, to a gathered Church, but τῷ κόσμῳ, to the World, *i.e.* To all ſorts of Men in the World, without any difference or diſtinction, either of Nation, Place or State, even to as many as would come to hear me. Though indeed for the moſt part he Preach'd in *Judæa* and *Galilee* (whence he was called † *a Miniſter of the Circumciſion*) and ſaith, ‖ *that he was not ſent, ſave unto the loſt Sheep of the houſe*

† Rom. 15. 8.

‖ Mat. 15. 24.

of Iſrael: yet doubtleſs ſometimes he Preached to a promiſcuous Company both of *Jews* and *Gentiles*, without making any difference, *Matt.* 15. 21.

Thirdly, *I taught*, ſaith he, *in the Synagogue*. There was one onely *Temple* among the *Jews*, and that was at *Jeruſalem*: but as in other Cities and Towns of the *Jews*, ſo alſo in the Metropolitan City, beſides the *Temple*, there were *Synagogues*; which were publick places appointed for Prayers, Sermons, Reading, and expoſition of the Law and the Prophets to the People. And in the *Synagogues* at *Jeruſalem*, and other Towns and Cities, *Chriſt* did moſt frequently and conſtantly Preach, as the Scriptures do abundantly teſtifie, *Matt.* 4. 23. *Matt.* 13. 53, 54. *Matt.* 21. 23. *Matt.* 9. 35. *Matt.* 12. 9. *Mark* 1. 21. *Mark* 6. 2. *Luk.* 4. 16. 21. *and* 44. *Luk.* 6. 6. *Joh.* 6. 59, &c.

Fourthly, He ſaith, I not onely taught in the *Synagogues*, but in the *Temple*, the moſt ſolemn and publick Place. The *Temple* at *Jeruſalem* was the place where the Prieſts did offer daily Sacrifices, and taught the People; to which, thrice in the year, all the Males, from all

all the Coasts of *Judæa*, were to resort. In this *Temple* did our Saviour *Christ* very frequently Preach, *Matt.* 21. 23. *Luk.* 19. 47, &c.

Fifthly, *I taught*, saith he, *where the Jews always resort*; where there was a full and free Concourse of all the Nation of the *Jews*, and many *Gentiles* also, from all Parts and Quarters of *Judæa*.

Lastly, And *in private*, saith he, *I have said nothing*. As if he had purposely and expresly denied himself to be, what they were apt to charge him with, a *private*, *seditious*, and *Schismatical Conventicler*.

'Tis true, that sometimes, through so great a resort of People to him, that neither the *Synagogue* nor *Temple* could hold them, he was fain to take * a *Mountain* for his Pulpit. Sometimes being not able to stand quiet, for the throng of People that crouded him, he retreated to † a *Ship*, that he might be the better heard, and taught the People from thence. Yet all this was publickly and openly to the World.

* Matt. 4. *ult.* *with* Matt. 5. ——— 1, 2.

† Luk. 5. 1-3.

As for Religious discourse with his Disciples, or others, in private Houses, either

either by way of explanation, or repetition of his publick Sermons, that we deny not, but he often uſed it. For
* Mark. 4. 10. we reade that when he was * κατὰ μόνας, *alone, they that were about him with the twelve, asked him of the Parable.* But as for ſubſtance of Doctrine, it was allways publick. He never ſpake privately to his Diſciples, or others, but they were the ſame things which he Preach'd publickly. He ſpake not other things to them in private, than what he ſpake publickly, but in another manner. And therefore even to that expoſition of his Doctrine, which he made privately to
† Matt. 4. 21. his Diſciples, he adds † *Is a Candle*
——— 22. *brought to be put under a buſhel, or under a bed? And not to be ſet on a Candleſtick? For there is nothing hid that ſhall not be manifeſted?* q. d. theſe Myſteries of the Kingdom of Heaven are therefore revealed unto you, not that ye ſhould Preach them in Corners, but to the whole World.

‖ Mark 2. 2. As for that place of St. *Mark* ‖ which ſeems to ſpeak of *Chriſt*'s Preaching in a *private Houſe*; though it be craftily urged on ignorant People, yet if rightly underſtood, it cannot make ought againſt

againſt what hath been ſaid. For I demand, was it a truth our Saviour Chriſt ſaid, *I always taught in the Synagogues and in the Temple, and in private I have ſaid nothing*, or was it not? To ſay the latter, were no leſs than blaſphemy, and to give him the lye, who is the God of truth, *who knew no* * *ſin, neither was guile ever found in his mouth.* If it was a truth (as it muſt needs, without monſtrous impiety, be acknowledged to be) then *he ever taught in the Synagogues, and in the Temple, and in private he ſaid nothing.* The occaſion of it was, his being called in queſtion for his *Doctrine*; his anſwer to which plainly declares, that as for ſubſtantials of Evangelical Doctrines, he ever taught them openly to the World in the Jewiſh *Synagogues* and *Temple.* Otherwiſe it would have been abſurd for our Saviour to have ſaid as he did † to *Pilate, why askeſt thou me of my Doctrine? ask them that heard me: Behold they know what I have ſaid.* For *Pilate* could not ask the *Jews* that were then preſent of any thing that he had ſaid in private, ſeeing they were none of his private Companions or Followers. If

* 1 Pet. 2.20.

† Joh. 18. 12.

If therefore there be any seeming *Antilogy* in any other Scripture, it is not so in reality, but appearance; it may seem so to our weakness, but it is not so in it self. For the Holy Ghost who is the spirit of truth in one place, is so throughout all the Scripture, without any real contradiction to it self, any where.

Ans. 1. Therefore to that place of St. *Mark* I have two things to answer. First, our English translation in that phrase (*he preached the word unto them*) doth not properly nor genuinely answer the Original Greek: which is, καὶ ἐλάλει αὐτοῖς τὸν λόγον, he spake to them; or as *Beza* renders it, *loquebatur eis sermonem*, he made a speech to them. And *Tremelius*, *loquebatur cum eis sermonem*, he talked or discoursed with them. Doubtless about Gospel-truths and Heavenly matters. When ever our Saviour Christ preach'd, or spake Sermon-wise, the Scripture useth other words to express it by, as διδάσκειν, to teach. Κηρύσσειν to preach or publish as an *Herauld*, in open place, in the hearing of a multitude: or εὐαγγελίζειν, to preach the Gospel. But as for the word here used by the

the Holy Ghoſt λαλεῖν, it is never uſed in Scripture properly and ſtrictly to ſignifie to preach; but to ſpeak, talk, or diſcourſe; which differs much from preaching. For though it be true, that whoſoever preacheth, ſpeaketh; yet it is not true that whoſoever ſpeaketh, preacheth. In all Languages there have ever been held a difference betwixt ſpeaking and preaching. *Solius ſacerdotis eſt prædicare, loqui autem communis vulgi.* Yea it is obſerved by the moſt skillfull in that Language that this word λαλεῖν amongſt Greek Authours, is ſtill uſed for the worſt kind of ſpeaking or talking. But in the New Teſtament indeed, it is uſed in a better ſenſe, but never properly and ſtrictly for, *to preach*; but to ſpeak as we do in common talk or diſcourſe. *When the Devil ſpeaketh a Lye he ſpeaketh it of his own*, Joh. 8. 44. *When I was a Child, I ſpake as a Child.* 1 Cor. 13. 11. *Speak the truth every man to his neighbour.* Eph. 4. 25. And in many other places we have the ſame word uſed, which were moſt abſurd to render by the word, *preach*. So that all that can be rationally or certainly gathered

red from that saying of St. *Mark*, is no more but this: That our Saviour Christ seeing such a multitude of people flock about him, took an occasion to fall into a religious discourse with them, and to talk with them of divine and heavenly matters: whether it were by minding them, of what he had publickly thaught, or explaining his Pulpit-doctrines to them, we need not much trouble our selves to inquire.

Ans. 2. But suppose he did preach (though it was not privately, but openly enough to the World, as any one that looks into the history, as it is recorded by the Evangelists, may easily perceive) in that house, or any else (as by his Divine prerogative he might doe what he would, and that which every private Minister is not bound to follow him in) yet how it can be made use of to countenance those, that set up a course of *house-preaching*, and that in other mens Parishes, where there are Preaching Ministers established by Law, and where they have no manner of allowance or Authority so to doe (as our Saviour Christ had) nay being forbidden by Authority (as he was not)

I do

I do not underſtand. As for ſpeaking to or with the people, in that houſe or any other; or making uſe of that, or any other private meeting, either in ſeparation from, or competition with, much leſs in oppoſition to, the publick Ordinances of God then in uſe (as our Conventicles now-a-days are uſed) that was far from our Saviour's meaning or practice, who improved that, and all meetings and occaſions, in ſubordination and direct ſubſerviency to the Synagogue-ſervice and Temple-worſhip of the Jewiſh Church.

And that Chriſt ſhould be a publick, and not a private houſe-preacher, the Scriptures did foretell long before his coming: By the Prophet *Eſay*. * *I have not ſpoken in ſecret, in the dark places of the earth.* And by *Solomon* † *wiſedom crieth without, ſhe uttereth her voice in the ſtreets, ſhe crieth in the chief place of Concourſe, in the opening of the gates, in the City ſhe uttereth her words.* All which was ſpoken of Chriſt, who is the Wiſedom of God, ‖ *in whom are hid all the treaſures of wiſedom and knowledge.* And it is obſervable what *Junius* notes upon thoſe words: *She*

* Eſ. 45. 19.

† Prov. 1. 21. 22.

‖ Col. 2. 3.

cried

cried in the chief place of Concourse; ubicunque eſt maxima frequentia, ſumpta locutio à concionum ritu. The form of ſpeech is taken from the rite, order, and approved cuſtome of Sermons, which were ever publick. * *For things are ſaid to be preach'd, not in that they are taught, but in that they are publiſhed in open hearing of all*; ſaith *Mr.* Hooker.

*Hooker's Eccleſ. polit. l. 5. Sect. 18.

Thus it appears our Saviour Chriſt was no private Conventicler, or houſe-creeping Preacher. He diſclaims it in himſelf, and diſallows it in his ſervants, whom he forewarns not to ſeek him in Corners. † *If they ſhall ſay unto you behold he is in the deſert* (among thoſe that withdraw themſelves from the publick worſhip) *goe not forth: Behold he is in the ſecret Chambers, believe it not.* q. d. When men ſhall tell you, in ſuch an Houſe, Parlour, or Chamber, there is one that *holds forth* Chriſt moſt ſweetly, let us goe hear him; goe not forth, believe it not. For what ſweet Doctrine of Chriſt, his Perſon, or Offices, can you hear there, which you cannot or may not hear in the publick? Why then will you baulk

† Mat. 24. 26.

the

the way of God's appointment, and seek Christ in ways of your own invention?

Now it is a wonder, that such as will pretend to Christ's example in circumstantials of the smallest sort, as *gestures*, *vestures*, and such like; yet will take boldness wilfully and constantly to swerve from his pattern in matters of such weight, as concern mens Eternal Salvation.

Neither did the Apostles of Christ after him, ever (as the Persons in question) thrust themselves into the places and charges one of another; But as the World was divided amongst them (to whom they were to preach the Gospel) so they did not intrude into one anothers line. They did not ἀλλοτριοεπισκοπεῖν, meddle with the cure of Souls, committed to the care and charge of others, lest God should say unto them, *who required this at your hands?*

This is plain from the words of the Apostle * we will not boast, εἰς τὰ ἄμετρα, of things without our measure, or not measured out to us. † *Significat regiones quas Deus nostræ prædicationi non desti-*

* 2 Cor. 10. 13.

† C. A Lapide & Bez. in L.

deſtinavit, nec admenſus eſt. He means thoſe Countries which God hath not meaſured out, nor appointed them to preach unto.

'Tis likely the falſe Apoſtles were wont to glory that they had been *Itinerants*, and travelled throughout all parts of the World, preaching the Goſpel. But (ſaith St. *Paul*) I will glory onely of this, that I have contained my ſelf within thoſe Limits and Bounds which God by his providence hath ſet me. He hath appointed me ſuch a portion of his People to preach unto, and * *nihil aliud appetam, vel mihi ſumam.* I will deſire no more, nor take upon me to meddle with any more. Ἀλλὰ κατὰ τὸ μέτρον τοῦ κανόνος, *but according to the meaſure of the rule which God hath diſtributed to us.* By the word κανὼν, (which properly ſignifies † a line to meaſure out Land, to every owner his proper portion) the Apoſtle underſtands (by a *Metonymy*) a certain quantity and portion of God's Field, the Church, in the tilling and manuring of which, he was to labour. And (ſaith the ‖ Apoſtle) *we ſtretch not our ſelves beyond this meaſure of ours.*

* Calv. *in Loc.*

† κάνονα *vocavit aſſignatam ſibi certam veluti arvi Dominici portionem, in qua excolenda laboraret.* Beza *in Loc.*

‖ v. 14.

ours. q. d. I do not meddle or make to preach in any of those places, where I have no right so to doe; nor to till that Field that is appointed for another man to labour in; nor to plant the Gospel in those Countries, which God hath committed to another man's care and pains.

God divided the World amongst the Apostles, distributing to every one of them a certain portion of his people, to preach the Gospel unto, measuring it out unto them, as it were, by line. As the Land of *Canaan* was divided among the twelve tribes of *Israel*, the Sons of *Jacob*. * (*He divided them an inheritance by line:* the manner whereof may be seen at large in the Book of *Joshuah*) in like manner to the twelve Apostles was the World divided; either by a Divine appropriation, or by a voluntary partition, to every one of them was allotted his proper portion, where he was to preach the Gospel and plant a Church. As † to St. *Thomas*, *India:* to St. *Matthew*, *Ethiopia:* to St. *John*, *Asia:* &c. St. *Paul* was to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles, and St. *Peter* to the Jews: *Gal.* 2. 7. It was a great

* Ps. 78. 55.

† C. A Lapide vid. Platina in vita Petri.

ſin which God caveats his People a-
* Deut. 19.14. Prov. 22.28. gainſt * *to remove their Neighbours Land-mark*, whereby every man's inheritance in the Land of *Canaan* was limited. A great ſin it is in all places; And therefore among the Curſes pronounced againſt the Breakers of the
† Deut. 27.17. Law, this is the third † *Curſed be he that removeth his Neighbours Land-mark*: to which all the People were to ſay *Amen*. The *Hebrews* had a ſaying
|| Maymon. tract. de furt. c. 7. l. 11. || *He that removeth his Neighbours Land-mark, and taketh of his Neighbours Limit into his own, though it be but one inch; if he doe it by force it is rapine, if he doe it in ſecret it is theft.* Accordingly, the Apoſtles thought it a great fault in any of them, to enter into their Neighbours Limits, or to take to themſelves but an inch of their poſſeſſion; and left that to the falſe Apoſtles, to *boaſt in another mans line*, and to intrude themſelves into thoſe places to preach, where any other was appointed for that work. * *Solicitè cavebant* (ſaith Learned *Camero*) they were exceeding carefull not to intrench one upon the other, or not to preach the Goſpel in thoſe places where others

* Camero praelect. ad Mat. 16. 18, 19. pag. 11. col. 2.

were

were appointed to preach, *nisi forte vel obiter, vel necessariâ de Causâ*, unless it were *in transitu*, onely in a Journey, as St. *Paul* at *Rome*, as he travelled into † *Spain*, or upon some other extraordinary occasion. Therefore the Apostle saith, he did φιλοτιμεῖσθαι ‖ ambitiously study and endeavour, *not to preach the Gospel where Christ was named lest he should build upon another mans Foundation:* But to keep within his *Line*, amongst the People appointed for his pains in the Ministry. Not, but that he might, upon occasion preach elsewhere: for we reade that he preached at *Damascus* * where those Christians were which he would have brought bound to *Jerusalem*. But this was occasionally, not purposely. As a Minister now may do, when he travels from his own place, and hath occasion to stay abroad, upon request or leave, bestow his pains elsewhere. As *Clemens* † tells us it was the custome of the primitive times, that if any Bishop or Presbyter came to another, he was intreated to preach. But concerning St. *Paul's* preaching abroad out of his own precincts, whether upon intreaty,

† Rom. 15. 24.

‖ Rom. 15. 20.

* Act. 9. 20.

† Clem. *constit.* L. 2. c. 48.

treaty, or otherwiſe, we need not inquire, ſeeing he had an Apoſtolical power, which was of univerſal extent in it ſelf, and ſuch as no Miniſter now can lay claim to. His Commiſſion was (as the reſt of the Apoſtles were) general, and (originally) not confined to any one place, as other Miniſters are, but they were to *teach all* * *Nations*. Yet becauſe every one of them could not travel and preach in every Countrey, therefore it pleaſed the Lord afterwards in Wiſedom, for good Cauſes, to order it (as it were) by a ſecond Decree, that *Paul* ſhould ſpecially have a care of, and preach to the † *Gentiles*. Yet this did no way diminiſh his Apoſtolical Authority, nor forbid him from preaching at all to the *Jews*, or *Peter* to the *Gentiles*, if occaſion did ſerve; for of *Paul* it is expreſly ſaid ‖ that he was to carry Chriſt's Name both to the *Gentiles* and to the *Children of Iſrael*. And it is generally believed that he was the Authour of the Epiſtle to the *Hebrews*. And of St. *Peter* it is not doubted that he both at *Antioch* and elſewhere, preached the Goſpel both to *Jews* and *Gentiles*. The Apoſtolical power

* Mat. 28. 19.

† Act. 22. 21. Rom. 1. 5. 1 Tim. 2. 7. Gal. 2. 7.

‖ Act. 9. 15.

power did extend to all Nations, but the Conveniency of the Church did require that ſome of them ſhould be fixed to one ſort of People in one place, and ſome to another. 'Tis true, St. *Paul* ſaith he was * *troubled with the care of all the Churches. i. e.* as he was an Apoſtle, ſo the care of all the Churches lay upon him, *quod ad jus attinet, & poteſtatem,* (ſaith *Camero*) he had right and power, to take care of all the Churches, as an Apoſtle, and ſo differing from all Biſhops and Presbyters now. And doubtleſs (as all good Miniſters of Chriſt do) he did take all the care that lawfully he might, or could, of the whole Church of Chriſt; eſpecially of all thoſe within his own precincts, and of his own planting; which, by an uſual *Synecdoche* in Scripture, are termed, *all.* Yet οἰκονομικῶς, for order and peace ſake, it pleaſed God that their perſons and labours ſhould be appointed for ſeveral diſtinct parts of the World, as in his infinite Wiſedom he ſaw was moſt convenient, for the better propagation of the Goſpel of Chriſt, in all the World. And it is the obſervation of the Excellent

* 2 Cor. 11. 28.

Divine *Martin Chemnitius* in his Commentary on that temporary precept of our Saviour Chriſt to his Diſciples.

* Mat. 10.5,6. * *Goe not into the way of the Gentiles, &c.*

‖ Chemnit. *Harm. Evang. c.72.pag.1025.* ‖ *Hoc temporarium præceptum fideles verbi Dei miniſtros admonet, ut ſinguli ſe intra metas legitimæ ſuæ vocationis, ad paſcendum illum Dei gregem, quì ipſis commiſſus eſt* (1 Pet. 5. 2.) *contineant, nec latiùs evagentur, aut falcem ſuam in alterius paſtoris meſſem, niſi ſpeciali conceſſione vel vocatione, mittant.* This temporary precept doth warn all the faithfull Miniſters of God's word, that all of them ſhould contain themſelves within the bounds of their lawfull Calling, to feed that flock of God that is committed unto them, and not to wander abroad or thruſt their hook into the harveſt of another Paſtour, without his ſpecial leave or calling.

By all which it appears that a forcible or ſurreptitious entry of one Miniſter, into another's charge, is deſtitute of all Scripture preſident or allowance; and therefore cannot be the Ordinance of God.

The Example of the Apoſtles meeting and preaching ſometimes in private Houſes,

Houſes, I conceive, cannot (but moſt impertinently) be urged to defend the practice I here diſpute againſt. For,

1. 'Tis not to the queſtion, which is, of a ſetled conſtituted Church, where a preaching Miniſtry is eſtabliſhed by Law. The Chriſtian Church in the Apoſtles days, was not ſetled and eſtabliſhed, as is ours, but in a way to be ſo.

2. The Magiſtrate was then heathen all the World over, ours now Chriſtian. Publick preaching and Chriſtian meetings, were not then ſuffered; our Church-Aſſemblies, are not onely allowed and protected, but commanded by Sovereign Authority.

3. They had then, either none at all, or very few Chriſtian-Churches erected, and ſo were forced to meet where they could; we want not Churches, but hearts to reſort to them.

4. The Apoſtles had a general and *extraordinary* call to preach any where, through all Coaſts and Parts of the World, where they were appointed to plant Churches; ſo have not the Perſons in queſtion. The office of an Apoſtle or Evangeliſt is now ceaſed.

5. It

5. It can never be proved, that the Apoſtles did, or would have made uſe of their private meetings, either in competition with or oppoſition to the publick Ordinances of God (as our modern Conventicles are) but in ſubſerviency (according as the neceſſity of thoſe times did require) to what publick and ſolemn Aſſemblies, they could then, or might in after-times, enjoy. For as our Saviour made uſe of all private Conferences and Meetings, not in ſeparation from, competition with, or oppoſition againſt, but in profeſſed ſubſerviency to the Synagogue-ſervice, and Temple-worſhip of the Jewiſh Church; ſo I am perſwaded, that the Apoſtles of Chriſt, together with the primitive Chriſtians, would have done the like, had the caſe in their time, with reſpect to the publick exerciſe of Chriſtian Religion, been the ſame, or the like to what it was in our Saviour Chriſt's time, with reſpect to the publick exerciſe of the Religion of the *Jews*. But foraſmuch as there were no Conventions for publick exerciſe of Chriſtian Religion permitted or commanded in thoſe times, untill the

the *Roman* Empire, and other Kingdoms of the World, became Chriſtian; it was therefore a thing impoſſible, that the private Meetings of the Apoſtles and thoſe primitive Chriſtians, ſhould be ſo made uſe of, in ſubordination to the publick Aſſemblies as were the private Meetings of our Saviour and his Diſciples in the Jewiſh Church. So that the caſe and condition of Chriſtianity in the primitive times, is ſo different from, and contrary to, what it is in the Church of *England*, where the publick worſhip is protected, and commanded by Authority, that their private Meetings cannot poſſibly hold any proportion or ſimilitude with ours. So that to argue from private Meetings in thoſe times of perſecution of Chriſtianity, to private Meetings in *England* in theſe days, is to take away the ſubject of the queſtion, and then to argue the caſe.

6. Neither did one Apoſtle then thruſt himſelf into the place where another was to labour, but contained himſelf within the compaſs of his *Line*, and portion of God's People that he was appointed to preach to. But the

matter

matter in queſtion is of a quite contrary nature, *viz.* of a ſilenced Miniſter's intruding himſelf in amongſt a People, over whom there is a preaching Miniſtry eſtabliſhed, and there taking upon him to gather Conventions, teach that People and perform miniſterial Acts amongſt them contrary to good Laws, without the conſent, yea againſt the allowance of the Paſtour of the place. So that neither the example of our Saviour Chriſt, nor of his Apoſtles can be brought to juſtifie or allow any ſuch practice.

ARGUMENT. VI.

THAT which God in his word hath branded with a black mark, forewarning and commanding his People to avoid, cannot be his ordinance or means of grace. For it is not God's manner to ſtygmatize or diſgrace his own ordinances, or to forbid or diſcourage any in the uſe of them; but to dignifie, advance the honour, and ſtrictly to enjoin the uſe of them: as knowing that

that the Devil and his inſtruments will ſufficiently vilifie and diſgrace them, and that there will be enough in all ages, who will diſuſe and forſake them. Yea God hath ſo far dignified his ordinances of the word and ſacrament; (which he intends to make uſe of as means of grace) that when he might have wrought it in mens hearts immediately by his own ſpirit, yet he hath put them off to his Miniſters to doe it, which is no ſmall honour. The caſe of the *Eunuch* in the *Acts* makes this plain, * *The Spirit bad* Philip *join himſelf to the Chariot.* Yea when God himſelf hath begun the work, yet he would not perfect it himſelf, but hath handed it over to his Miniſters, to be completed by them. This he did at the Converſion of St. *Paul*, || *He ſent* Ananias *to him, who entered into the Houſe, and put his hands on him and ſaid, Brother* Saul, *the Lord* (*even Jeſus which appeared to thee in the way as thou cameſt*) *hath ſent me that thou ſhouldſt receive thy ſight, and be filled with the Holy Ghoſt. What greater honour than this, could God have put upon his Ordinance of the Miniſtry?*

* Act. 8. 29.

|| Act. 9. 17.

But

But he hath ſet a black mark, and brand upon the Perſons and Miniſtry in queſtion, and commanded a withdrawing from them. * *Now I beſeech you, brethren, mark them which cauſe diviſions and offences contrary to the Doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them: for they that are ſuch, ſerve not the Lord Jeſus, but their own bellies, and by good words and fair ſpeeches deceive the hearts of the ſimple.* The Emphaſis of the Apoſtles words is worthy our obſervation. *Mark them*, ſignifying ſuch a diligent, wary, and circumſpect care, as Watchmen uſe that ſtand on an high Tower to deſcry the approach of an Enemie. They mark diligently all Comers, and give notice according as they apprehend any danger, for the preſervation of the City. *And avoid them*; as dangerous Perſons, hurtfull to Chriſtian Society. And how ſweet and fair ſoever their words ‖ ſeem to be, yet they will ‖ *eat as doth a Canker.* They give not their poiſon, but wrapt up in Honey. Their ſmooth Language is their net, wherewith they catch many a ſimple Soul, that is not exceeding carefull leſt any man ſhould beguile

* Rom. 16. ——17,18.

Σκοπεῖν, ſcl. t. attente & diligenter quaſi hoſtes è ſpeculâ obſervare. Beza.

‖ 2 Tim. 2. 17.

beguile him (as *Joab* did * *Amaſa*) with enticing words. Their flattering ſpeeches and ſpecious pretenſes of Purity and Doctrine, and tenderneſs of Conſcience, tend to no other, but to deceive the *ſimple* and unwary, to get themſelves a maintenance, and to fill their *own bellies*, they are like the falſe Apoſtles in the Church of *Corinth* ‖ *who transformed themſelves into the Apoſtles of Chriſt, yet were but deceitfull workers, to bring that People into bondage, to devour them, and to take of them.*

* 2 Sam. 20. —9, 10.

‖ 2 Cor. 11. —13. 20.

How guilty the perſons in queſtion are, of *cauſing Diviſions* amongſt People whereever they come, of renting the Unity of the Church, and diſturbing the peace thereof; of giving offence to Rulers and Governours by their conſtant and wilfull violation of all Eccleſiaſtical and Civil order and diſcipline, is too notoriouſly known by ſad experience in all places. And whether the other Character in the text, belongs to them, that they are περιεργαζομενοι, and ſeek not ſo much mens Souls (for therein they may ſpare their pains as needleſs, where there is a preaching Mini-

Miniſtry eſtabliſhed) as their purſes.

* 2 Cor. 2.17. Καπηλεύοντες τὸν λόγον τοῦ Θεοῦ. * *making merchandize of the word of God*; their hearers and followers are beſt able to tell, and will (I think) in a while, be weary of it. In the mean time, we that are Paſtours of Flocks, find by experience, in thoſe places where theſe perſons intrude themſelves, that the People are ready to pull their own Miniſters bread out of their mouths, to feed thoſe their new Maſters, live we never ſo blameleſly, and take we never ſo much pains amongſt them, for the good of their Souls. Yea, they hate thoſe their Miniſters moſt, who beſt deſerve their love, and lay moſt obligations on them. According to that of the Philoſopher, *Leve æs alienum debitorem facit, grave, inimicum.* A bad Debtor when he owes but a ſmall ſumm, will be contented to look towards you; but when it is great, more than he can well pay, or, as much as he thinks he can get, then he will be glad to be rid of you.

Sen.

Again: The Apoſtle foretells, that towards the latter end of the World (and ſurely thoſe days are come upon us)

us) ‖ *Perilous times ſhall come, and there* ‖ 2 Tim. 3. 5, 6.
ſhall be many that ſhall creep into houſes, and lead Captive ſilly Women ——; *from ſuch turn away.* And whom do the men (we are ſpeaking of) moſt prevail upon, and draw after them? but eaſie and unſtable ſouls, ſuch as have itching Ears, *always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth,* well meaning People that are ſpurred on with zeal, and want judgment to hold the reins, many times an over vehement bending into ſome way of our own chuſing, doth not onely withdraw us from the left hand way, the way of Idolatry and Superſtition (from which we ſhould all withdraw) but from the middle way too, in which we ſhould all walk. And then the danger is great. The Devil doth many times make zeal and religion his inſtrument, to drive men on to incredible extremities of impiety. For, if he cannot take away mens faith, yet he will quench their Charity to others, even to thoſe to whom they owe it moſt. "For *zeal, "except it be ordered aright, when it "bendeth it ſelf to conflict with things, "either indeed, or but imagined to be

Sæpè fit ut qui falſum ex una parte apparens vident, ejus fugiendi ſtudio abrepti longius, non in verum deveniant, ſed in falſum alia parte poſitum, atque ita errorem non exuunt ſed mutent. Hug. Grotius, *in diſquiſit. Pemens laguna. pag. 1.*

*Hooker Eccleſ. polit. l. 3. ſect. 3.

" opposite to Religion, useth the razor
" many times with such eagerness,
" that the very life of Religion is there-
" by hazarded, through hatred of tares,
" the corn in the field is plucked up.
" So that zeal needeth both ways a
" sober guide. Zeal against Popery
" (saith another learned Authour, who
" conceals his name) except it be bri-
" dled by discretion, and attended by
" equal pace of strength, is not the way
" to protect, but to betray a cause.
" Those that were lately zealous for the
" *good old cause*, lost it; and the King
" had not better friends, than his most
" implacable Enemies. Fury is as bad
" in a Champion, as torpour; it is an
" even temperature of wisedom and va-
" lour that doeth the execution. A so-
" ber Protestant though he rageth less,
" shall prevail more on a Papist, than
" a mad Fanatique. The greatest part
" of zeal against Popery that is found
" amongst the Nonconformists, is like
" that of one frantick, who wounds
" himself, whilst he would strike his
" foe. They cannot confute it without
" condemning themselves. This un-
" guided zeal will be sure to run far e-

" nough

" nough from Popery, and ſo runs in-
" to it; as he that ſails round the Globe,
" the farther he goes, after he is half
" way, the nearer he approacheth to
" the place whence he ſet out. The
" Quakers, a conſiderable part of the
" Nonconformiſts, railed at Popery,
" till they began to be taken for Jeſuits,
" or their Diſciples.

The like *Stygma* the Apoſtle St. *Jude* caſts upon ſuch Perſons. *There are* * *certain men crept in, παρεισεδυσαν, &c.* * Jude 4.
παρεισδύσαν. How diſgracefully and diſdainfully the Scripture ſeems to ſpeak of them, who irregularly, and contrary to good order and lawfull appointment, intrude themſelves, as Teachers, into the Church, under pretence of Religion! They ‖ *creep* in amongſt People; they come in by ſtealth, as if they came in at a Window or Back-door, inſinuating themſelves into flocks and ſocieties of God's People, *creeping* to Conventicles; profeſſing themſelves to be the onely *Goſpel-preachers*, and pure Worſhippers of God, as if all Religion were loſt, except what they bring and profeſs. Whereas they are indeed (unleſs we will mince the

‖ παρεισδύσαν *ſubrepo, furtim intro.*

Appellation the Holy Scripture fastens on them) but a new sort of *Creepers* gotten into the body of the Church. *From such* (saith the Holy Ghost)

*2 Tim. 3. 5, 6. * *turn away.*

† 2 Thes. 3. 6. Again, St. *Paul*, † *Now we command you, brethren, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw your selves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not according to the Tradition he hath received from us.* With more Apostolical Gravity and Authority, a Duty cannot be urged on Christians, than this, of withdrawing or separating from such, as walk ἀτάκτως, disorderly. The Metaphor (say Expositours) is borrowed from the custome of War; wherein every Souldier hath his proper station and employment appointed him, from which when he swerves, he becomes ἄτακτος, out of his rank. Now in an Army, every Officer hath his place, Company and Command assigned him by his General, whereunto he must keep, and from which he must not stir. And if he should leave his place, and take upon him, either to make an attempt on the Enemy of his own head, without Commission and Orders

Orders from his General, though with never ſo good ſucceſs; or Command in another Company, than that which is aſſigned and allotted to him by Authority, he is guilty of a breach of that εὐταξία, good order and diſcipline that ought to be in an Army, and brings in a moſt odious and deſtructive diſorder and confuſion: and ſo deſerves to be either quite caſhiered, or otherwiſe by Martial Law ſeverely to be puniſhed. Yea, ſo abſolutely neceſſary hath it been thought, in the opinion of experienced Souldiers, that the Laws and Orders of Martial-diſcipline in an Army ſhould be ſtrictly obſerved, that whoſoever have erred from it, though in the *leaſt Punctilio*, have been adjudged worthy of death without mercy. Famous to this purpoſe is that ſtory we reade in *Valerius Maximus*, of *Manlius Torquatus* Conſul of the *Romans* in the Latin War, who commanded his own Son to be beheaded, for fighting the Enemy without his Father's Privity and Command, though he was provoked thereunto by *Geminius Metius* General of the *Tuſculans*, and although he had obtained a ſignal Victory, and very much

and rich ſpoil? * *Satius eſſe judicant patrem forti filio, quam patriam militari diſciplinâ carere*: Judging it better that a Father ſhould be deprived of a valiant Son, than that his Country ſhould want Military diſcipline. The Church is by Chriſt twice together in one place † ſaid to be an *Army with banners*: he that is the Commander in chief is God himſelf, holy, juſt and wiſe; not *the Authour of Confuſion*, but the inſtitutour and lover of *order*, and the hater and puniſher of ſuch as wilfully tranſgreſs ſuch good rules of wholſome diſcipline, as he, either immediately by himſelf or mediately by his Deputies on earth, ſhall eſtabliſh amongſt his People. And is Diſcipline ſo needfull in an *Army*, and can it be thought needleſs in the *Church*? Is our *ſpiritual* warfare of leſs danger or concernment than our bodily? Shall it be thought to be a venial offence, to be committed without danger, when a perſon ſhall undertake to intrude himſelf into the place and company of another, and lead on, and engage a Party in the Church militant, into ways of *ſchiſm* and profaneneſs, in oppoſition to the

* Valer. Max. L. 2. c. 7.

† Cant. 6.4.10.

way

way of true Religion and Worſhip of God eſtabliſhed, not onely without any lawfull allowance, but contrary to all Law and Diſcipline, both Civil and Eccleſiaſtical? The baſeneſs and wickedneſs of ſuch doings, is excellently diſplayed by Learned Doctor *Henry More* in his *Apology* annexed to the ſecond part of * *his enquiry into the Myſtery of iniquity.* "Becauſe ſome men "(ſaith he) think themſelves of more "popular gifts for Prayer and Exhorta- "tion; for theſe to ſpur out, and run "on in a Career, without attending the "direction of their Superiours, were as "if the Toy ſhould take thoſe Troopers "that are beſt horſed, to ſet madly a gal- "lopping, becauſe they find their horſes "will goe ſo freely, and ſo turn the "orderly March of the Army into a "confuſed Horſe-race, and put them- "ſelves into a rout, even without the "aſſault or purſuit of any Enemy.

* Pag. 549.

Can it be pleaſing to Chriſt that any ſhould follow ſuch men in their irregular and hare-brain'd ways, when his Apoſtle bids all men † *from ſuch to withdraw?* To what end ſhould there be ſuch flocking after them, unleſs their

† 2 Theſ. 3.6.

followers could be partakers of some spiritual benefit from them? But this cannot be. For their disorderly walking, and busie medling where they have not to doe, renders all they doe unprofitable, and is (in effect) a spending of a great deal of pains, to no purpose; wearying themselves out *to weave the Spiders Webb*, and to sow to the wind. The Apostle doth most excellently expres it in a most elegant allusion of words, μηδὲν ἐργαζομένους, ἀλλὰ περιεργαζομένους, * *working not at all, but are busie-bodies.* Their work is neither lawfull, nor profitable. For seeing that the Ministers of Christ are disposed of in the Church κατὰ τὴν οἰκονομίαν Θεοῦ, † *according to the dispensation of God*; it doth follow, that those things which they teach or doe, receive their force and effect not from their own wills and authority, but from the Authority, Approbation and Concurrence of him that sends them. And therefore what a Minister doeth contrary to the will of God, cannot be of any force or effect at all, as to the accomplishment of the end, on mens souls, for which God ordained the Ministry, for he is bound to preach

* Syr. *nihil quicquam operantes nisi vana.*

† Col. 1. 25.

preach not onely thoſe things, but in that manner as God hath appointed.

God's Command for a ſeparation and withdrawing from ſuch dividing, houſe-creeping, and diſorderly Perſons, muſt needs argue their Miniſtry not to be his ordinance, ſince he ſo brands it, and gives ſuch Cautions againſt it.

ARGUMENT. VII.

THAT cannot be the Ordinance of God for the working of grace, that is performed without any manner of Commiſſion or Authority. For the neceſſity of keeping that good order which God hath commanded in his Church, requires, that no man ſhould attempt any thing of that important nature and high concernment, upon his own head, or, by a power derived no higher than from himſelf. Whoſoever ſhall take upon him to preach God's word, in order to the Converſion or ſaving of ſouls, muſt be able to give a good anſwer, to that queſtion which the chief Prieſt and Elders

ders of the People, put to our Saviour Christ, when he was teaching in the
* Mat. 21. 23. *Temple.* * *By what Authority doeſt thou theſe things, and who gave thee this Authority?* He that cannot make a ſufficient and ſatisfactory reply to it, and yet ſhall adventure upon the work, may juſtly be accounted raſh, indiſcreet, and more haſty than needeth, or than wiſedom requireth.

But ſuch is the Miniſtry in queſtion, undertaken without any Authority or Commiſſion. For all the Authority and Commiſſion that a Miniſter hath, in a conſtituted ſetled Church, he receives in his *ordination.* Before that, he had no Authority or Warrant at all to preach the word, or to perform any miniſterial Act. Now all the Authority that a Miniſter of the Church of *England* hath delivered to him in his *ordination,* is expreſſed in theſe words: *Take thou Authority to preach the word, and to adminiſter the Holy Sacraments in the Congregation where thou ſhalt be lawfully appointed thereunto.*

In which words it is plain that the exerciſe of his Miniſtry is reſtrained to *lawfull appointment,* as to the place where

it

it shall be exercised. What that *lawfull appointment* is, I need not trouble my self or the reader here, to look into, seeing the Ministry in question hath not the least colour of it, or pretence to it, for it is supposed to be in a place where there is another *lawfully appointed* to perform the same. In the Council of *Chalcedon* (where there were 630 Fathers met, about the year of our Lord 451) It was thus decreed * *Neminem absolute ordinari jubemus, Presbyterum, aut Diaconum, nec quemlibet in Ecclesiastica ordinatione constitutum: Eos autem qui absolutè ordinantur decrevit sancta synodus vacuam habere manus impositionem.* That none should be ordained absolutely, whether Presbyter or Deacon, or any in Ecclesiastical orders: and whosoever should be absolutely ordained, the Holy Synod decreed his ordination void. And the 33*th* Canon of the Church of *England* saith, *That it hath been long since provided by many Decrees of ancient Fathers, that none should be admitted either Deacon or Priest, who had not first some certain place where he might use his function.*

*Concil. Chalced. Can. 6.

For

For though in *ordination* the perſon ordained is made a *Miniſter of the Catholick Church*; and being ordained to a function, he may (by the appointment of thoſe that have Authority in the Church, or with leave of the Paſtour of the Congregation) preach any where: And although (as Mr. *Baines* obſerves) *It is good* * *for a Miniſter to be like a young Woman, ſo full breaſted, that ſhe can both feed her own Child, and lend a draught, upon intreaty, to her Neighbours*: Yet he is not a *Catholick Miniſter of the Church* (as the Apoſtles and Evangeliſts were, whoſe office, being *extraordinary*, is long ſince ceaſed in the Church,) and therefore ought not to take upon himſelf to preach any where.

* P. Baines *in* Eph. 3. 2.

Neither yet did the Apoſtles themſelves doe ſo, (as hath been proved) though their Commiſſion was without Limit, as to place. But kept within their *Line* meaſured forth by God to them. It was never God's intention that the two Tribes of *Levi*, and *Gad*, ſhould be confounded one with another; nor is it any way agreeable with Scripture rules and order, that a Miniſter ſhould be

be, a *wandring ſtar*, but fixed regularly in ſome Orb of the Church, as a Paſtour of ſome Flock or Congregation of his People.

Seeing therefore none is lawfully appointed to perform the miniſterial function, or any part of it, in ſuch a place as is in queſtion, but the Miniſter of that Congregation; acts of the Miniſtry done by any other Perſon that ſhall intrude himſelf among them, without and againſt his conſent, contrary to lawfull appointment, and all good conſtitution that concern admiſſion of Miniſters to paſtoral charges, are done without any Authority, Commiſſion, or effect; and conſequently cannot be God's Ordinance, who doth not uſe to ſend any to preach in order to the working of grace in mens hearts, without any Power or Authority, yea againſt both.

ARGU-

ARGUMENT. VIII.

THAT cannot be the ordinance of God, as inſtrumental to the work of grace, that inſtead of building up People in Faith and Holineſs, demoliſheth Chriſtian Duty, and, in the natural tendency of it, produceth ſinfull and pernicious effects. 'Tis true, theſe may accidentally follow, through the Corruption of man's nature, and Satan's ſuggeſtions, upon the moſt right and pureſt diſpenſation of God's word and ordinances. St. *Peter* ſpeaks of *ſome* * *that ſtumble at the word.* And St. † *Paul* ſaith, *to ſome we are the ſavour of death unto death*, as to other ſome, *the ſavour of life unto life.* The word preach'd (like the *water of jealouſie*) ‖ when it is received into an honeſt and good heart, it doeth it good, and makes it *fruitfull*; but when into a corrupt, it doeth hurt and cauſeth it to *rot.* Yet the moſt proper intent, and genuine fruit and effect of it, is to doe good, to inlighten, convince, convert, and ſave mens ſouls.

* 1 Pet. 2. 8.

† 2 Cor. 2. 16.

‖ Numb. 5. 27, 28.

But

But the Miniſtry in queſtion doth directly produce ſinfull and pernicious effects, and ſuch as a tender heart may tremble to think on. I would not have the reader expect that I ſhould here make a particular enumeration of every one of thoſe ſinfull fruits and effects, that are produced by the Miniſtry of intruders, and upholders of Conventicles: for that is a thing no more poſſible for me to doe, than it is for any man particularly to reckon up every one of the many thouſands of abſurdities that will unavoidably follow in diſpute, upon one that is granted or yielded to. I will content my ſelf therefore (and let the reader doe the like) with the mention of ſo many of them onely, as I here uſe arguments againſt the practice which is the proper cauſe of them, and thouſands more.

Poſito uno abſurdo mille ſequuntur.

First, it tends to the breaking of that bond of near relation, that is, and ought to be betwixt a Paſtour and his flock. Though it be a truth well known to but a few in this age, and little conſidered by any, yet it is nevertheleſs certain and undoubted, that there is a very

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intimate

intimate relation betwixt a lawfull Paſtour and his People. The Scripture ſeems to aſſert a kind of *Matrimonial* union betwixt them. A Miniſter is, after a ſort, *married* to that Congregation over whom he is lawfully ſet; and they to him. Our legal incumbency on a Church, is our Marriage to that Church. Hence is that phraſe of the Apoſtle to the *Corinthians* * *I am jealous over you with a Godly jealouſie. Sumpta eſt metaphora à procis zelotypis*, as *Beza* notes; a Metaphor taken from the manner of a Perſon eſpouſed to a Woman, who cannot endure any one to be a Companion or ſharer with him in her affections. For as a King cannot endure a rival with him in his Kingdom, nor an Husband in the Marriage-bed.

* 2 Cor. 11.2.

Οὐκ ἀγαθὸν πολυκοιρανίη, εἷς κοίρανος ἔστω.

So neither can a Miniſter in his Pariſh. And though in regard of internal, ſpiritual, everlaſting, and inſeparable union, Chriſt himſelf is the Husband of the Catholick Church. Yet in regard of external and miniſterial duty, a particular Miniſter of Chriſt, may be ſaid to be *married* to that particular

Rom. 7. 4.
Rom. 19. 7.
John 3. 29.

cular flock or portion of God's People, *over whom*, in a regular and orderly manner, *the Holy Ghost hath set him.* This made St. *Ambrose* expound that place of St. *Paul* (* *A bishop must be the Husband of one wife*) allegorically † *unius uxoris. Si ad superficiem tantum literæ respiciamus, prohibet digamum Episcopum ordinari: si vero ad altiorem sensum conscendamus, inhibet Episcopum duas usurpare Ecclesias.* If we respect the Letter of the text (saith he) St. *Paul* forbids any that hath had two Wives to be ordained a Bishop: but if we ascend to an higher sense, he forbids a Bishop to take to himself two Churches. And St. *Hierome* argues out of those words (*Eph.* 5.) *Husbands love your wives: Audiant Episcopi, audiant Presbyteri, audiant Doctores subjectis suis se esse subjectos.* Let Bishops, Priests, and Doctours learn in this, that when they have married themselves to a Flock or Congregation, they are become subject to their Subjects. How? subject to their Subjects? What are they become inferiour to their Flocks? In no wise, ‖ *They are over you in the Lord* (saith St. *Paul*) underlings then they are to

* 1 Tim. 3. 2.

† Ambros. *ut citatur à Cotono exc. 4. de dig. Sacerd.*

Vid. Hieronymi *Epist.* Oceano *p.* 676. *Nè virginalis pauperculæ societate contempta, ditioris adulteræ quærat amplexus.*

‖ 1 Thes. 5. 11.

none of them. But they are so subject to their flock, as an Husband is subject to his Wife, and no otherwise; Now she is to be subject to him, and he (by God's Law) to * *rule over her*. So that the subjection he means, is the subjection of Love. As *Pliny* told *Trajan* the Emperour † *Nihil magis à te subjecti animo factum est, quam quod imperare cœpisti*. A King doeth nothing so like a subject, as to love his subjects, to devise ways, and to use his power for their good. Such a subjection is that of the Husband to the Wife, and that of a Pastour to his flock, to whom he is *married*, and to no other. Whence (as Mr. *Prin* observes) ‖ he is stiled, *Parochus*, and his People, *Parochia*, by the Canonists and Lawyers, because he is espoused to that peculiar Parish. And to this agreeth the 15*th* Canon of the *Nicene* Council; *matrimonium inter Episcopum & Ecclesiam esse contractum, &c.*

* Gen. 3. 16. 1 Cor. 11. 3.

† Plin. *secu. in Epist. Trajano.* *See* 1 King. 12. 7.

‖ *Legat. vesth. p.* 6.

Concil. Nicen. *Can.* 15.

There are several things that prove a very near relation betwixt a lawfull Pastour and his People.

1. The titles the Holy Ghost gives in Scripture to Ministers and their People.

ple. They are called *watchmen*, and *shepherds*, *Isa.* 62. 6. These, their *flock* over whom they watch, and whom they keep. *Isa.* 20. 28. They are called *Fathers*. 2 *King.* 6. 21. 1 *Cor.* 4. 15. 1 *Thes.* 2. 11. These, their *Children.* 1 *Cor.* 4. 14. 2 *Cor.* 6. 13. *Gal.* 4. 19. 1 *Tim.* 1. 2. *Philem.* 10. 1 *John.* 2. 21. Ministers are called *husbandmen*, and *builders*; and their people, God's *tillage*, and *building*. 1 *Cor.* 3. 9. They are called *stewards* of their people, God's *household*, to whom they are to give their portion of meat. *Luk.* 12. 42.

2. The duties imposed by God on either party, prove a very near relation betwixt them. As a Minister is commanded to take * the *oversight of them*; to † *feed them*; and to perform the office of a faithful servant of Christ, that he may ‖ *give an account* to him; for his flock. So the People also are charged with many duties towards their Pastours. As,

1. To *know* and love them dearly; as the *Galatians* did ‡ St. *Paul*, and as he enjoins all Christians to doe toward their Ministers. † *We beseech you Brethren, to know them that labour among you,*

* Act. 20. 28.
† 1 Pet. 5. 2.
‖ Heb. 13. 17.
‡ Gal. 4. 14, 15.
† 1 Thes. 5. 12, 13.

you, and ever you in the Lord, and admonish you, and esteem them very highly in love for their works sake. Indeed the vulgar Latin, reade it, *ut noveritis.* But *Beza* renders it, *ut adnoscatis*, that you acknowledge them as your Pastours and Teachers. And (as * Learned *Zanchi*) *pro pastoribus vestris ac patribus reverenter amplectamini*, that ye reverently receive and embrace them as your Pastours and Fathers. And as *David* saith in the Psalms † *I will not know a wicked person* (where, *not to know*, is to contemn) so, to *know*, is to have in reverence and honour. Thus our Saviour professeth to wicked men ‖ Matt. 7. 23. ‖ *I never knew you.* Which places are urged both by *Beza* and *Zanchi*, to prove their exposition. *And that you highly esteem them in love.* ὑπὲρ ἐκπερισσοῦ. Some reade it, abundantly: Some, exceedingly: It properly signifies, more than exceedingly; Love in abundance, in an overflowing measure; an overplus of love. *Beza* renders the same expression in another place * *summâ cum exuperantiâ*, with the greatest exuberance of love. And here, *ut supra modum charos ducatis*, that you account them

* Zanch. in Loc.

† Ps. 101. 4.

* Bez. in Eph. 3. 20.

them above measure dear to you.

2. To obey them, and submit to their pastoral office and rule over them, *Heb.* 13. 17.

3. To afford them an honourable and liberal maintenance. *Matt.* 10. 10, 1 *Cor.* 9. 6–15, *Rom.* 15. 27. *Gal.* 6. 6–8. 1 *Tim.* 5. 17, 18. Not out of charity, as a free gift; but of justice, as a due debt. 3 *Joh.* 9.

4. To seek their *comfort*, and to give them all due *encouragement*, that they may doe the work of the Ministry among them, *with joy and not with grief*. Heb. 13–17.

All which duties would not have been enjoined on both parties, pastour and people, were there not a very near relation between them. Whereas none at all of these are required either of a stranger, to them; or of them to a stranger. And this is the Language both of the *Presbyterian*, and *Independent* Ministers, when they speak of the relation that is betwixt them and their People, they say, * they are *married* to their Flock.

* *Vindicat. of Presbytery. p.* 123.

Now where one of these *Demagogues*, and Patrons of Conventicles shall intrude

himself into a Town or Parish, and take upon him there to set up a course of house-preaching, to administer the Sacraments, to visit the sick, and such like duties of the Ministry (as they doe) it tends directly to the breaking this bond and near relation that is betwixt Pastour and People; and breeds such alienation of affection in them, towards him, as was betwixt the *Jews* and *Samaritans*, between whom the Scripture saith, * *there was no Conuerse.* For they being conscious to themselves of the guilt of that, (which upon a generall presumption, they cannot but believe, he can in no wise take well at their hands) *viz.* that they should put themselves under the Ministry of another, they will grow to such a degree of strangeness to him, as to shun common neighbourhood and acquaintance with him; yea they will easily account him their greatest Enemy, (as *Ahab* did *Elijah*, or the *Galatians* did St. *Paul*) because he doth not flatter them in that, which, how wicked and unlawfull soever it be, is therefore the sweeter to them, because forbidden, and enjoyed (as it were) by stealth. † For † *stollen waters*

* John 4. 9.

† Prov. 9. 17, 18.

waters are sweet, and bread eaten in se-
cret is pleasant, though the end of such ill gotten delight be in the *depths of hell*. What esteem can they have of their Ministers Person or Office, which are look'd upon by them, as either needless or indifferent, if not tedious and burthensome? What regard to his Doctrine, which (as experience shews us) is, and will be so lightly set by, that some will wholly forsake attendance on it, others bestow it (as there is too much cause to doubt) more out of curiosity than necessity, and (as some have not been ashamed to confess) rather to censure (as those that listned to our Saviours Sermons did † *to catch him in his discourse*) than to learn and to practise? And so the Pulpit which is God's Tribunal, is made the bar, and they ‖ become not *doers of the Law, but Judges*. What dependance can a People have on their own Pastour, on his discharge of ministerial Duties amongst them, where some are seduced into a perfect revolt from him, others brought to a loose indeterminacy in Divine worship and Church-communion, and all to a lukewarm indifference

* *Medio de fonte leporum surgit amari aliquid.*

† Matt. 22. 15.

‖ Jam. 4. 11.

what Ministry they enjoy; and Church-Assemblies are made matter of Complement rather than necessity? Usurpation and Intrusion, as it shall never want store of friends and favourers among the ignorant and unstable vulgar, be it never so unjust; so the more abbettours and maintainers it hath in any place, the greater must the defection needs be from him, to whom they own their adherence.

And thus will that golden chain of relation, that is, and ought to be betwixt a Pastour and his People, by this means be wholly dissolved, *and those put asunder whom God hath joined together.* For, as it is in a marriage, it is not the having of an Husband, that makes the Wife honest, chast and undefiled, but her loving her Husband, and keeping her self wholly to him, otherwise the Wedlock bond is broken: so in this union betwixt Pastour and People, it is not the having a Minister, that maintains and upholds the relation and conjunction, that God would have to continue between them; but the acknowledging of him, keeping to him, and depending on him in the Lord,

Lord, for all miniſterial Acts to be performed by him, among them; otherwiſe, the knot of unity that ought to be betwixt them, is untyed.

Now here I could tell the Reader ſo lamentable a ſtory, of the truth of this ſad effect, which upon mine own experience I have found, of this uſurpation and intruſion, I am now diſputing againſt, that if he be ſuch a one, as hath any fear of God before his eyes, any zeal for his houſe, worſhip and ſervice, or any care of the Unity and Peace of the Church, it would make *both his ears* at the hearing of it *tingle*.

My Pariſh was a Virgin, pure and undefiled, free from all invadours and underminers of her Chaſtity, till about four years ſince, when the *Act of Parliament* for the removal of ſuch of the *Nonconformiſt* miniſters, as refuſed to take the oath therein preſcribed, out of all Corporations, ſent or occaſioned one of them (not to preach but) to inhabit amongſt us. Before whoſe coming, there was not a Congregation in the Country (that I know) for ſo many People (being near 1000 ſouls) more entire, more unanimous,

more

more constant at all parts of publick worship, more free from all inclination to *schism, separation*, or any of the raigning Epidemical faults of this Age. We had then what happiness we could desire, and (it seems) greater than we deserved. When the ground all about us, was wet with the showres of *schism* and *prophaneness*, we (like *Gideon's fleece*) were dry: But because we gave not God thanks sufficient, he suffered Satan to erect *Altare contra Altare* (for so went the style of the ancient Church for *schism*, which in our modern Dialect is) a *Conventicle against the Church*. Now, that Congregation which was before entire, is now miserably divided, and those that lived under the oversight and teaching of one lawfull Pastour (as a chast Wife under the guidance of her own Husband) *according to God's Holy Ordinance*, are gone aside to others, and admit of the unlawfull embraces of strangers.

Claudite quæso aures qui audituri estis, ne tantæ impietatis vocibus polluamini.

I could tell the Reader of some of those people, who were formerly constant attendants on all parts of divine Worship, that are now by this meanes totally gone off (*non fugati, sed fugitivi*

civi, as say the Brethren of the *Presbyterian* way, of the *Independents*) and for the space of several years, have not set their foot over the threshold of God's house: yea, so far are they withdrawn, and to so high and impious an abhorrency of God's publick Worship are they brought, as to detain their very Children from publick Baptism. They are modelled (as they call it) into a new Church-way for the enjoyment of Ordinances. And no wonder; for the Scripture tells us, that besides God's Church, *Satan* will have his too. There is *Ecclesia Credentium*, and *Ecclesia Malignantium*; according to that of *David* * *odi Ecclesiam malignantium: I have hated the Congregation of Evildoers.* And † *Tertullian* tells us, *faciunt favos & vespæ, faciunt Ecclesias & Marcionitæ. Wasps* make Combs, but empty ones; *Schismaticks* and *Sectaries* make Churches, but false ones; ‖ *Singuli quique cœtus hæreticorum se potissimum Christianos, & suam esse Ecclesiam Catholicam putant*; saith *Lactantius*.

* Ps. 26. 5.

† Tertul. *l.* 4. *contra* Marcion. 1.

‖ Lactant. *lib.* 4. *divinarum inst. cap.* 30.

Of others I could relate, that upon this sad occasion are in part revolted from the publick Assemblies of the

Saints

Saints; and though they live near enough to the Church, yet come thither but now and then, and that, to hear a Sermon onely, and to no other part of divine Service: To satisfie curiosity, I suppose, rather than Conscience; wherein they seem to discover much of Hypocrisie, but nothing of Piety. For, I would demand of them, doe they well, or ill, when they come? If well; why then come they not at all times, when they may? If ill; why then come they at any time? What moves them at any time to *approach the place where God's honour dwells?* Is it because he hath commanded it, or to doe him any service thereby? I ask him again, whether hath not he commanded the publick Service of the whole day, as well as a part? A *Lamb* at the Evening * as well as a *Lamb* in the Morning? Of every Lord's day, as well as of one now and then? Why else did the Lord call the Sabbath of old † *an holy Convocation*? As if it ought to be nothing else; as if the whole day were to be spent at Church, and in keeping publick Assemblies, so far as conveniency and edification of the people

* Exod. 29. 39, 41.

† Levit. 23. 2.

ple will permit. Why elſe did Holy *David* deſire || *to dwell in the houſe of the Lord for ever*? Why prayed he || Pſ. 23. 6.
that he might be ſo happy? * *One thing* * Pſ. 27. 4.
have I deſired of the Lord, that I will ſeek after: that I may dwell in the houſe of the Lord all the days of my life. Therefore, if Conſcience to obey God, or deſire to doe him ſervice, did draw them to his houſe at any time, or to any part of his Worſhip, the ſame would induce them at all times, and to all parts of it. The liberty then that ſuch perſons take in God's ſervice, as if all were Arbitrary, argues much of hypocritical wantonneſs, nothing of ſound or ſincere godlineſs.

They who are *fed with Corn from Heaven*, † *meat to the full*, are thus † Pſ. 78. 24.
——27.
ſain to loath the *Mannah*, that Rained down upon them twice every Sabbath-day. Of a third ſort I could inform the Reader, who being weak, yet (I hope) well-meaning Chriſtians, not *knowing the depths of Satan*, under a ſpecious pretence of Piety, are not content with what they hear at Church, but muſt afterwards fill their heads with notions which they hear at Conventicles, where-

‖ Jude. 12. wherewith *they* ‖ *feaſt themſelves without fear* after they have been fed to the full in God's houſe, *with Angels food*. *Without fear* (I ſay) of offending God, by breaking the order he hath ſet in his Church: by countenancing, abetting, or joining themſelves with ſuch unlawfull and ungoſpel-like Aſſemblies: *without fear* of offending or provoking the Rules of the Church (which they are bound to obey) by ſeeing their Laws deſpiſed and affronted: *without fear* of expoſing themſelves to the temptation and hazard of falling ſo fearfully as they cannot but ſee, that ſome of their Brethren and Neighbours have done: And *without fear* of loſing what they have heard in publick by departing immediately from the *Church* to a *Conventicle*; as if all Religion did conſiſt in nothing but hearing, and all the Service of God were but (according to the *French* ſcoff) *a mere Preach*. If this be the way of keeping the Sabbath, where is room then for Meditation, which the Scripture as much enjoins as hearing? * *Thou ſhalt meditate on the Law, that thou mayſt obſerve to*

* Joſh. 1. 8.

doe

doe according as is written. Mary therefore kept *Christ*'s sayings because † *she pondered them in her heart. David* therefore grew to be ‖ *wiser than his teachers, because God's Law was his meditation.* Conference with Neighbours, and Family-instructions, will by this means also be issued out. * *Thus shall you say every one to his neighbour, and every one to his brother, what hath the Lord answered, and what hath he spoken?* The best of Hearers, even *Christ*'s own Disciples took another course than these now doe: When they had heard their Master Preach, they spent their time after Sermon in conferring among themselves about what they had heard, and went to their Teacher to be better informed, and † to have all doubts resolved. For want of so doing, it comes to pass with too many, as sometimes it did with some of them, that though they had seen their Lord's mighty power, in feeding *five thousand men with five loaves, and two fishes*; yet their Faith was never the stronger: And this was the reason; ‖ *They considered not the miracle of the Loaves, for their heart was hardned.* They had seen the miracle

† Luk. 2. 19.

‖ Ps. 119. 99.

* Jer. 23. 25.

† Joh. 16. 17,
——— 19.
Mark 4. 10.
——— 7. 17.
——— 10. 10, 11.

‖ Mark 6. 52.

racle but they had not considered it, nor meditated on it, and therefore it did them no good at all. In the judgment of the *Presbyterian* Divines themselves, the way these people take is not the right. For the *Assembly of Divines* in their *Directory for Worship*, give this rule for the Sanctification of the Lord's day: * that "what time is vacant be-
"tween, or after the Solemn meetings
"of the Congregation in publick, be
"spent in Reading, Meditation, Repe-
"tition of Sermons (especially by cal-
"ling their Families to an account of
"what they have heard) and Catechi-
"sing of them; holy conferences,
"prayer for a blessing upon the pub-
"lick Ordinances, singing of Psalms,
"visiting the Sick, relieving the Poor,
"and such like duties of piety, chari-
"ty, and mercy, accounting the Sab-
"bath a delight.

* *Directory page.* 57.

In a word, I could inform the Reader what impious devices have been used, not onely to make a rent in the Church, but also to keep it open, that it should never close again; by endeavouring that an irreconcileable prejudice might be perpetuated in the minds of

of people, againſt the publick Miniſtry and Miniſters of the Church. And to the end that thoſe poor deluded Souls, which have been drawn off from their due attendance to God's publick Ordinances, to wait on theſe men in their clanculary and irregular conventions, might never return to the Church any more; I have obſerved that the abſence of one of theſe Maſters of Conventicles, in the places where they are held, have ever been carefully ſupplied by the preſence of ſome other Domeſtick Chaplain, to keep up their Houſe-meetings. As if *Jeroboam*'s impious policy ſhould never be forgotten, who not daring to truſt his new *divided Tribes* in a joint reſort to the Temple at *Jeruſalem*, ſet up † his *Calves* to be Worſhipped by them nearer home.

† 1 King. 12. ——27, 28.

But I will not rake any longer in this puddle, leſt it ſtink in the noſtrils of pious and ſober Chriſtians, as it cannot but doe in God's already.

Now I appeal to all my judicious and learned Brethren of the Clergy, and to all perſons elſe, of ſtayed principles and piety, whether for a ſtranger thus to pluck the work of a Paſtour of a

Congregation out of his hands, be tollerable in the Church of Christ, or no? Whether this practice that tends thus to divide betwixt Minister and People, breaking the near bond of relation, that is, and ought to continue between them, robbing him of his flock, and taking them off from dependance on him, for the enjoyment of the work of his ministry, be of God, or no? And whether he hath ordained any such course, as the means of Grace in his Church; or whether this be not rather a strategem of Satan, to introduce all manner of impiety and ungodliness? The *Presbyterian* Divines themselves have given their judgment on my side, already, in this case. In these words: ‖ "To make "a Rupture in the body of *Christ*, and "to divide Church from Church, and "to set up Church against Church, and "to gather Churches out of true Churches: And becaufe we differ in some"thing, therefore to hold Communion "in nothing; this we think hath no "warrant out of the word of God, "and will introduce all manner of con"fusion in Churches and Families; and "not onely disturb, but in a little time "destroy

‖ *Vindicat. of Presbyt. page* 121.

"deſtroy the power of Godlineſs, pu-
"rity of Religion, peace of Chriſtians,
"and ſet open a wide gap to bring in
"*Atheiſm*, *Popery*, *Hereſie*, and all
"manner of wickedneſs. So alſo in
their Preface to the *Jus divinum* of *Jus divinum regim. Eccleſ. in præfat.*
Church-government, in the laſt page
ſave one, they have theſe words. "Ga-
"thering Churches out of Churches
"have no footſteps in Scripture; is
"contrary to Apoſtolical practice; is
"the ſcattering of Churches, the
"Daughter of Schiſm, the Mother of
"Confuſion, but the Step-mother to E-
"dification.

If this Doctrine of theirs be (as doubtleſs it is) true and godly, then ſurely the practices of many of them that are *Antipodes* to it, muſt needs be (by their own confeſſion) very falſe and impious.

We reade in Scripture that * *if fire break out and catch in thorns, ſo that the ſtacks of corn, or the ſtanding corn, or the field be conſumed therewith, he that kindleth the fire ſhall ſurely make reſtitution.* By *thorns*, are generally underſtood ſuch thorns as Husbandmen uſe in hedges, wherewith they * Exod. 22. 6.

ſeparate and diſtinguiſh their Land from other mens. By *breaking out of fire*, any man's making a fire in the field to burn up weeds, or otherwiſe, to make their Land fruitfull. And 'tis meant (ſay interpreters) of ſuch kindling of fire, when any hurt comes of it *præter intentionem accendentis*, beſides the intention of him that kindles it; it being carried by the wind, and lighting on ſome dry hedge, and finding combuſtible matter, goes farther and burns the Corn, either in ſhocks, or ſtanding by. And in this caſe of *Caſualty*, by the Law of God, reſtitution was to be made, becauſe firing the hedge was the cauſe of the Corn's being burnt. Otherwiſe, if a man did wilfully and purpoſely ſet Corn on fire, he was to ſuſtain greater puniſhment by the Civil Law, *vel decapitetur, vel comburatur, vel beſtiis ſubjiciatur*; he was to be beheaded, or burnt, or caſt to wild beaſts. God, whoſe own the whole Field of the Church is, hath ſet an hedge of ſeparation and diſtinction, to bound out every one of his ſervants the Miniſter's property. Theſe are your limits; and thus the portion

portion of my people committed to your charge; this piece of Land is your ſeveral to manure for me, the fruit whereof I will require at your hands at harveſt. He that ſhall (not *caſually*, but *wilfully*) break down, or fire that hedge, and ſo cauſe a combuſtion in the Church, the leaſt that can be required of ſuch a perſon, is, that he make full reſtitution for the damage he hath cauſed, that he ſet himſelf to quench the fire he hath kindled, and to make up the hedge again, which he hath conſumed; undeceive the People he hath ſeduced, by acknowledgment of his fault, reſtoring what he hath fraudulently taken, and ceaſe to be any more an *incendiary* for the time to come.

To the poor deceived People, ſhall I ſay, out of zeal to God's Glory, and ſafety of your ſouls, as St. *Paul* to the *Galatians* * *I would they were even cut off that trouble you*? It were better one man or a few did periſh, than that the Unity of the Church ſhould be broken. Rather, *for loves ſake*, I heartily wiſh, that thoſe בְּנֵי שְׁאוֹן || *filii ſonitus*, *tumultuous ones*, that delight to

* Gal. 5. 12.

|| Jer. 48. 45.

make a noiſe in the Church, that they may be heard, had more peaceable and quiet ſpirits, and would either content themſelves *to doe their own buſineſs* (if they have any) or elſe ſit ſtill, and ceaſe troubling you, or themſelves, in matters that belong to others. And though you have been drawn away from your *Conjugal* duty to your own Paſtours, and *have gone aſide to others in ſtead of them*, by means of the amarous Courtſhip of ſuch, as want not *fair ſpeeches* and winning Oratory
* Rom. 16. 18. * *to deceive the hearts of the ſimple*, but intrude themſelves in amongſt you,
† 2 Pet. 2. 3. † πλαστοῖς λόγοις *with feigned words*; or,
‖ 1 Cor. 1. 17. ‖ ἐν σοφίᾳ λόγου, *with wiſedom of words*: or (as elſewhere the Apoſtle perſueth it)
* 1 Cor. 2. 1. 4. with * *excellency of ſpeech and of wiſedom*; or, *inticing words of man's wiſedom*, inſomuch, that (if it were poſſible) the very Elect would be deceived by them: Yet I hope, through the aſſiſtance of Divine grace, you will ſoon bethink your ſelves and repent, and ſo return from *following after your Lovers*, (with the houſe of *Iſrael*) and ſay,
† Hoſ. 2. 7. *I will* † *goe and return to my firſt Huſband, for then it was better with me than now.*

Sc-

Secondly, it divides the intire body of Christ also, and makes such factions as were in the Church of *Corinth*, where one said * *I am of Paul; another, I am of Apollos; and another, I am of Cephas*: Than which, there is nothing that more demonstrates People to be † *carnal*, whatsoever they pretend to the contrary. It makes the Church of Christ (which should always be, as some time the Children of *Israel* were, from *Dan* ‖ even to *Beersheba, all as one man*) to be a *Baal-Perazim* (the place where *David* smote the Philistins.) * *A Valley of Divisions* and *Breaches*. It breeds such animosities and exasperations of mind amongst Christians, that it makes the Members of the Church, *militant* among themselves, and against their Ministers, doeing us (though unwillingly) the kindness, as to free us from that *woe* denounced by our Saviour † *when all men shall speak well of us*; and none at last but Satan and his Servants, *Atheists* and *Papists triumphant*. It causeth such rents in the Church, that the end thereof will be (unless a prodigy of Divine mercy prevent it) the common Enemy of our

* 1 Cor. 1. 11. ——— 12.

† 1 Cor. 3. 4.

‖ Judg. 20. 1. ——— 11.

* 2 Chron. 14. ——— 11.

* Luc. 6. 26.

Religion will laugh, whilſt the promoters of ſuch diviſions have cauſe to weep.

As the Tyrian Woman that opened the gates of the City to the Enemy, and was herſelf trodden to death at their entry.

It promotes ſuch a War, whoſe Victory ſhall have a ſorry triumph. It deals worſe with the ſeamleſs Coat of Chriſt (which St. *Cyprian* ſaith * was a ſign intended by our Saviour, to ſhew how his Church ſhould be woven together in Unity), than the Prophet *Ahijah* the *Shilonite* did with the new garment, wherewith *Jeroboam* had clad himſelf † who *even rent it in twelve pieces.* It mangles the body of Chriſt, into as many parts, as there are parties, as if it were no better than the body of the *Levite's Concubine*, which ‖ *he divided with her bones, and ſent into all the quarters of Iſrael.* It was a worthy ſaying of the late reverend and learned Biſhop of *Sarum*; * *Si ſchiſmata Eccleſiæ tolli poſſunt (uti proculdubio poſſunt) ſuſpendi mallem ad collum meum molam aſinariam, &c.* If the ſchiſms that are in the Church may be taken away (as doubtleſs they may) I had rather a Milſtone were hanged about my neck, and I drowned in the bottom of the Sea, than that I ſhould any way hinder

* Sacramento veſtis & ſigno, declaravit Eccleſiæ unitatem. Cyp. de unit. Eccleſ. Sect. 6.

† 1 King. 11. 30.

‖ Judg. 19. 29.

* Davenant ad pacem exhort. p. 21. 22.

hinder that work, or not withall my heart and ſtrength promote it, which is ſo pleaſing to God, and ſo neceſſary for the avoiding of ſcandal. A gracious ſpeech; not unlike that of an holy Father of the Church before him (*Greg. Nazianzene*) who (as *Ruffinus* * reports it) in the tumultuous diviſion of the People, cryed out, *mitte me in mare, & non erit tempeſtas.* He offered himſelf (*Jonah* like) to be caſt into the Sea, to appeaſe the tempeſt in the Church, that neither the peace of it might be diſturbed, or Unity broken. Some of the brethren of the *Nonconformiſts* have been of the ſame Judgment, whatever this or their practice, now is. Memorable to this purpoſe is that ſaying of Mr. *Baxter* to his People of *Kidermiſter* ‖ "I "ever loved (ſaith he) a Godly "peaceable Conformiſt, better than a "turbulent Nonconformiſt; and ſhould "I make a party, or diſturb the peace "of the Church, I ſhould fear, leſt I "ſhould prove a Firebrand in Hell, for "being a Firebrand in the Church. "And by all the intereſt I have in your "judgments and affections, I here charge you,

* Ruffin. *Hiſt. Eccl. l.* 2. *c.* 9.

‖ Baxter *Epiſt. to his Book of Reſt.*

"you, that if God ſhould give me up
"to any factious Church-renting courſe
"(againſt which I daily pray) that
"you forſake me, and follow me not a
"ſtep.

It is an unhappy degree of wickedneſs, to be a ring-leader in any *ſchiſm*. Every acceſſory is faulty enough, but the firſt Authour abominable. Thoſe who either by his example, ſuggeſtion, advice, connivence, or otherwiſe, are taught to doe ill, increaſe his ſin as faſt as they do their own. * *Whoſoever ſhall break one of the leaſt Commandments, and ſhall teach men ſo, ſhall be called leaſt in the Kingdom of Heaven.* An unruly beaſt breaks the hedge, and feeds in forbidden Paſture; the whole herd follows; but the owner muſt anſwer for all the treſpaſs that is committed. Therefore is *Jeroboam* ſo often branded in holy Writ with this note of infamy, *Jeroboam the Son of Nebat, that made Iſrael to ſin.* His fault lived, when he himſelf was dead; and 'tis often ſaid by Divines, that his torment increaſed in Hell, according as his ſin increaſed upon earth; and that the wickedneſs of *Iſrael* will not be

* Mat. 5. 19.

taken

taken off from his Soul for ever. It was ſhame enough to *Iſrael*, that they were made to ſin by *Jeroboam*, but O the miſerable Eſtate of *Jeroboam*, that made *Iſrael* to ſin! his pretence was fair enough, but that was no excuſe to the foulneſs of his crime, nor is it any mitigation to his preſent torment. Let the Authours of *ſchiſm* in the Church, pretend what they pleaſe, to Religion and Truth, yet how they can have the true love or power of either in their hearts or lives, that ſeek neither the Church's Peace and Unity withall, I cannot underſtand. The Holy Ghoſt in Scripture joins both together * *Love truth and peace.* And ‖ *ſpeak the truth in love.* He follows neither, that perſues them not both. It was an unqueſtionable Maxime amongſt Chriſtians in the ancient Church (which is no leſs a truth now, than ever) * *non habet Dei charitatem, qui Eccleſiæ non diligit unitatem.* The Love of God abides not in them, who do not love, and keep, the Unity of the Church.

* Zach. 3. 19.
‖ Eph. 4. 15.
* Aug. *com.* Don. *de bapt.* *L.* 3. *c.* 16.

Nay, the practice in queſtion, tends not onely to the dividing and diſtracting the Church, but even to the diſſolving

ſolving and deſtroying her being. It puts the members of the body of Chriſt out of joint, and cauſeth a Luxation of the parts; and ſo hinders that ſpiritual Nutrition, thriving and growth in grace, that ought to be in the body of Chriſt. For, as in the natural body of man, if a member be ſeparated from it, it can receive no nouriſhment or growth; nay, if there be but a diſlocation of a part, ſo that it be onely out of joint, it will not thrive or proſper, but wither and conſume, till it be ſet right again: ſo the myſtical body of Chriſt, can never *increaſe with the increaſe of God*, if either there be not a right Union of the joints to the head, or if that ἁφὴ συνδέσμου, * the Ligament and bond that knits and faſtens one member to another, be broken. Now this Union of the members, the Apoſtle ſaith † is made by the *Ligament of Love:* which he therefore calls ‖ *the bond of perfection*; becauſe as it unites Church-members among themſelves, ſo it is the cauſe, that they communicate mutual help, to the profit and preſervation of the whole. The

* 1 Col. 2. 19.

† Eph. 4. 3. 16.

‖ Col. 3. 14.

mem-

members of the Church, then, being made ſo looſe, and ſet at ſuch diſtance; ſo divided and diſtracted one from another, ſome hurried this way, and ſome that, it muſt needs argue that this bond is either quite broken, or much looſned. And if it be a truth (which Philoſophers affirm) that * every natural body deſires no leſs its unity than its entity; I ſee no reaſon why the ſpiritual and myſtical body of Chriſt, the Church, ſhould not in like manner deſire its unity, ſince, if it be, and continue thus unhappily divided, it cannot long ſubſiſt in its entity. As a tottering wall of ſtones heaped up together, without mortar or binding, is eaſily ſhaken and thrown down: ſo muſt the Church be ſoon brought to ruine, if this diſtracting and dividing courſe be ſuffered and practiſed. By concord and good agreement among Chriſtians † the Church grows and is enlarged: So by their diſcords and diviſions it will in ſhort time || periſh and come to nothing. Say I this onely? Or ſay not the brethren of the *Nonconformiſts* the ſame? "He that is "not the Son of peace, is not the Son of

* *Quodlibet corpus non minus appetit unitatem quam ſuam entitatem.*

† Act. 2. 43 — 47. — 5. 12. — 14.

|| Mat. 12. 25. Gen. 4 8. 2 Sam. 3. 1.

"of God (saith Mr. *Baxter*) all o-
"ther sins * destroy the Church conse-
"quentially, but division and separation
"demolish it directly. Building the
"Church is but an orderly joining the
"materials; and what then is disjoy-
"ning, but pulling down? † Believe not
"those to be the Church's friends, that
"would cure and reform her, by cut-
"ting her throat. *Pro Ecclesia clami-*
tant (saith St. *Cyprian* of such) they
cry out for the Church, but *contra Ec-*
clesiam dimicant, their practice is a
fighting against the Church. And that,
not by open and professed hostility,
but by secret and unseen Policy. Their
pretences are friendly, but their acti-
ons mischievous; their voice like *Ja-*
cob's, but their hands like *Esau*'s.

* Baxter *ubi supra.*

† *Si in sinu meo natus, si uberum meorum lacte nutritus, adversus me gladium levas redde quod dedi, & esto, si potes, aliter Christianus.* Hieronim. *adverss. Luciferanos.* p. 493.

III. Thirdly, it hinders the *Communion of Saints*, that holy and sweet fellowship which all the Members of Christ's Church ought to have both with Christ their head, and each with other. When, in the natural body of man, the members are joined to the head, and one with another, they have by virtue of that Union, Communion also, and

and do impart bloud, ſpirits, and life from one to the other: So in the myſtical Body of Chriſt, the members being joined to the Lord, and one to another, there will be a ſweet Communion among themſelves in heart and affections, * *joy with them that rejoice,* and ſorrow with *them that weep,* prayer each for, and each with other; *the multitude* † *of them that believe will be of one heart, and one ſoul.* Now one of the cloſeſt bonds of Union amongſt Chriſtians, is in their communicating together in holy duties. We are then moſt one, when ‖ *with one mind, and with one mouth, we glorifie God together.* When holy *David* would ſet forth the greateſt intireneſs of ſacred friendſhip, he deſcribed it by * *walking to the houſe of God in company together.* The end and effect of our joint partaking in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, is to ſeal up this Unity. As by one of the Sacraments, *we are baptized into one body,* ſo by the other ‖ *we are made to drink into one ſpirit.* And therefore the Apoſtle, from our Communion together at the Lord's Table, concludes our Union one with another, & incorporation into

* Rom. 12. 15.

† Act. 4. 32.

‖ Rom. 15. 6.

* Pſ. 55. 14.

‖ 1 Cor. 12. 13.

into (not the eſſential, but) the ſpi-
* 1 Cor. 10. 17. ritual body of Chriſt. * *We being many, are one bread, and one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread.* A Father thus comments on that place.
† Cyril. *l.* 10. *c.* 13. *in* Johan. † *Omnes unum corpus ſumus in Chriſto, quia etſi multi ſumus, unum tamen in eo ſumus, omnes enim de uno pane participamus.* We are therefore all one body in Chriſt, becauſe, though we are many in our ſelves, yet in him we are all one, for we all partake of one bread. *Nam ſi in humanis menſæ & ſalis communicatio, amoris cauſa eſt & ſignum, quanto magis id erit in communione menſæ & panis Domini?* If among men the communicating together at one table, and in one diſh, is both a cauſe and ſign of love; how much more then would it be ſo, in the communicating together at the Table, and of the bread of the Lord? Yea, the very aſſembling of Chriſtians together in the Church, is, by St. *Chryſoſtome*
‖ Chryſ. *Serm. de Euchariſt.* ‖ called, *the Communion of Saints.*

That then which tends to make rents and parties in the Church, and divides Chriſtians each from other, in external Conjunction of publick duties,

as

as well as internal concord of hearts and affections (as the practice in queſtion hath been proved, and by experience is found to doe) muſt needs hinder *the Communion of Saints*. Union being broken, there can be no Communion: for it flows from Union, and is no other (in the Etymology of the word) than common Union. And as there is nothing that obſtructs Chriſtian Communion ſo much as diviſions do, ſo, when once they are made, there is nothing more hard to be compoſed again. * *A Brother offended, is harder to be won, than a ſtrong City; and their contentions are like the barrs of a Caſtle.* * Prov. 18. 19.

For as no bond is ſo ſtrong, as that of Religion; ſo no Hoſtility ſo cruel and outragious, as that which difference in Religion occaſioneth. † *Think not* (ſaith our Saviour) *that I am come to ſend peace on the earth; I came not to ſend peace, but a ſword: for I am come to ſet a man at variance againſt his Father, and the Daughter againſt her Mother, and a man's foes ſhall be they of his own houſe.* This is commonly through the policy of Satan, and malice of men, † Mat. 10. 34. ——— 36.

the fruit of diviſions in point of Religion amongſt Brethren.

And if the bond of Communion betwixt the members be broken, I ſee not, but that the bond of Union with Chriſt their head, muſt be broken alſo. How can they exiſt as members of Chriſt's body, which have left their coupling and conjunction, with the other members of the ſame? Neither they, nor thoſe that cauſe it, can, in the judgment of St. *Auſtine*. || *Ii qui a compage corporis membra alia avellere conantur, ſeipſos a Chriſti unitate ſeparant.* They that draw the members from Communion one with the other, do cut off themſelves from their Union with Chriſt. * *Impium enim & ſacrilegum divortium eſt, eos qui in Chriſti veritate conſentiunt diſtrahere.* Saith *Calvin*, It is an impious and ſacrilegious divorce, to divide thoſe, who would otherwiſe agree in the truth of Chriſt. The ſame is acknowledged by the *Preſbyterian* Divines. || *If we be the body of Chriſt, do not they who ſeparate from the body, ſeparate from the head alſo?* And by the unanimous conſent of the ancient, godly, and learned *Nonconformiſts*,

|| Aug. *Tom.* 3. *de fid. ad* Pet. *Diac. cap.* 43.

† Calv. *Comment in* Rom. 16,17.

* *Vindicat. of Presbyt. pag.* 112, 113.

miſts, in their grave and modeſt confutation of the || *errours of the Browniſts and Separatiſts*; where in the firſt words of their Book, they ſay, "That the Church "of *England* is a true Church, and ſuch "a one as from which, whoſoever wit-"tingly and willingly ſeparateth him-ſelf, cutteth himſelf off from Chriſt. And they prove it at large by unanſwerable arguments, in the following pages of their Book. || *Publiſhed by Mr.* William Rathbane *an. Dom.* 1644.

* *A præſumptione igitur illicitâ excuſari nequeunt, qui nimis amando ſententiam ſuam, uſque ad præcidendæ communionis audaciam perveniunt.* They are therefore no way to be excuſed from ſinfull preſumption, who out of a fondneſs to their own opinion, proceed to that boldneſs and hardineſs, as to interrupt Chriſtian Communion. *Malunt nullam habere, quam non ſuam*; They had rather there ſhould be no Religion at all, than that their own ſhould not take place. * Aug. *Tom.* 3. *de Baptiſt. cont. Don. c.* 5.

They that are any way inſtrumental to break unity, that true-Lovers knot which every Chriſtian ſhould wear in his breaſt all days of his life, will find at laſt by miſerable experi-

ence, that destruction will follow it, if repentance precede not to prevent it. For, if the God whom we serve, be the *God of peace*, Jesus Christ our head and Saviour be the *Prince of peace*, the spirit of Holiness, the *worker of peace*, the blessed Trinity, in Unity of Deity, *the authour of peace and lover of concord* (as our Church expresseth it) how then can it join it self with the disturbers of both, and not rather separate from those which separate from their Brethren, and are instrumental to draw as many after them as they can?

IV. Fourthly, It gratifies (at least) two main sinfull Corruptions, to which people are naturally prone, both mentioned together by St. *Paul*, in one place. The first is, their discontent with their own Pastors, who are regularly and orderly sent of God to them. ‖ 2 Tim. 4. 3. ‖ *After their own lusts they will heap to themselves teachers.*

1. The great fault here propheſied to be in the latter times, was, *heaping up many teachers*. One will not serve a peoples turn, but they must have a multitude. A woman that forsakes her

her Husband's bed, will be ready *to pour out her fornications to every one that passeth by*, and not content her self with the embraces of one single stranger alone, but be ready to prostitute her body to any one.

2. And there is an Emphasis in the word ἑαυτοῖς, *to themselves*. They will be their own chusers. They will not accept, nor submit to those, who by the hands of the Rulers of the Church, God shall place over them, but take to *themselves*, upon their own judgment and choice, whom they please. This is according to his opinion, who expounding the word ἐπισωρεύσουσι used in this place by St. *Paul*) saith, * *quod sine judicio, & temere sunt colligturi doctores suos*: They shall rashly gather together teachers of their own.

* Leigh *in crit. Sac.*

3. Διδασκάλους. Teachers; as they esteem and use them in contradistinction to Pastours; for they will not admit of any to have a pastoral rule and care over them, but *teachers* to tickle their Ears, and please their fancies. And which is yet worse,

4. Κατὰ τὰς ἐπιθυμίας τὰς ἰδίας, *according to their own Lusts*. Such as do best

please their humours; such as are of the same party with themselves, that are in opposition to that which themselves oppose. *Beza* interprets it thus, *prout hoc vel illud illis arriserit*, as this or that best pleaseth them.

The second is, the *itch of the ear*, φιλοκηκία, a disease very common, yet never so Epidemical, as in these days. And there are two things, that very much stir and provoke this humour.

1. *Novelty.* If the thing, either for the matter, or the manner of it, be new and strange, our *Athenian* dispositions will soon incline us ‖ *to spend our whole time in it.* Let a *Physician* be never so learned, honest, experienced, and successfull in his place, yet if but an *Empirick* or *Mountebank* come into the Country, and set up his Stage, though he doeth nothing but put off deceitfull and Sophisticate Drugs, and takes mens money, yet he shall not want at all times a full resort to him, because he is a new-comer, and his pretended method and means of cure, are new and unusual. In Religion also, people are naturally φιλοκηκοι, apt to be led away with insatiable desire of hearing

‖ Act. 17. 21.

ing new men and new things, and *liſten rather to fables* * *than to wholeſome words that are according to godlineſs*: rather admire and adore the new conceits of every *Novelliſt*, than receive the great myſteries of Salvation in love of the truth, from him, whom God hath ſet to watch over their Souls. *Mitte quod ſcio, dic quod neſcio*, is their *Motto*; we have heard this man long enough, our Ears itch now to attend to ſome other; what we know is ſtale, things freſh and unheard do better pleaſe us. It is not the word, but the man they deſire to hear. And therein they ſhew themſelves to be the moſt obſervant diſciples of the great Maſters of errour and deceipt, the *Papiſts*: For this is a Doctrine taught by *Stapleton* * in the *tenth* of his *quodlibets*, *non quid loquitur, ſed quis, à bono Catholico attendendum eſt*. A good Catholick ought not to regard what is ſpoken, but who it is that ſpeaks. And if the ſpeaker prove a μαθόλογος, and ſtuff up his diſcourſe with idle and impertinent ſtories, how fabulous ſoever, he ſhall find more attention and applauſe, from ſuch humo-

* 2 Tim. 4. 4.

‖ Stap. *lib.* 1 *de Doct. princ. cap.* 5.

† *Apud quos de humano arbitratu divinitas penſitatur, niſi homini Deus placuerit, Deus non erit, homo jam Deo propitius eſſe debebit.* Tertull. *Apol. cap.* 5.

rous † hearers, than he that with greateſt evidence of the ſpirit and power, makes known *the Oracles of God.* But certainly that man is under a very great diſtemper of body, that grows weary of his good ordinary food. The ſtomach is very ſickly, when it cannot take in any ſolid meat, but the fancy is ſtill working after rarities. And if ever that perſon recover his former health he will find, that his body will never hold to be in better temper, than when he keeps to his ordinary Diet.

2. *Prohibition* by Authority. Things denied, are always moſt deſired, and the enjoyment of them is therefore the ſweeter, becauſe reſtrained by Law.

* Horat. *carm. lib.* 1.

* *Audax omnia perpeti*
Gens humana ruit per vetitum nefas.

Ever ſince our firſt parents tranſgreſſed in eating the forbidden fruit, all the ſinfull poſterity of *Adam*, are ready to run moſt dangerous adventures for a taſte of that, which they ſhould not touch. How juſt and reaſonable ſoever the prohibition is, yet it will allways be looked on with a jealous Eye,

by

by thoſe that are concerned in it, as if there were a more than ordinary excellency in the thing denyed; and it were therefore kept from us by our Superiours (though they mean us never ſo much good in it) becauſe they envy us the enjoyment of it. Whence it comes to paſs, that (as beaſts) though their own paſture be never ſo good, yet if they are bounded in, they cannot contain themſelves, but will adventure to leap the hedge, that they may goe farther, though they fare worſe.

Were it ſo that the doors of our Churches were ſhut up by Authority, People forbidden to reſort thither, or to attend the Miniſtry of their own Paſtours any more, and commanded to frequent the private meetings of ſtrangers onely; then would theſe People be ſoon weary of their reſtraint, and pretend great zeal to God's houſe, and *the place where his honour dwells*, then would their Souls ſeem to long, and even to *faint within them, for the Courts of the Lord, to ſee his Power and his Glory, ſo as they have ſeen it in his Sanctuary*: Then would they ſeem

to

to account their own Miniſters *worthy of double honour, to receive them in the Lord with all gladneſs, and to hold them in reputation.* Oh the ſtrange nature of the Sons of men, to whom a Legal prohibition is a forcible invitation, that know not the worth of Mercies but by the loſs of them!

Fifthly, it alienates the affections of People from the true worſhip of God eſtabliſhed by Law in our Church; ſhakes the minds of the weak, and begets even in thoſe who have profeſſed, they have not the leaſt exception againſt it, but ſuſpect ſomewhat amiſs in it onely upon this ground, becauſe they ſee others (of whoſe judgments they have a good confidence) withdraw from it, and chuſe rather to frequent private meetings than to ſerve God in the publick Congregations. Who have not heard the railings and revilings that have proceeded out of the mouths of thoſe, who are the favourers, and followers of theſe unlawfull Aſſemblies, againſt the Book of Common-prayer? And who may not obſerve, their conſtant and ſtudyed with-

withdrawing from the uſe of it? *That* book, which

1. For the Authours and Compilers of it, was compoſed by the moſt Learned and Holy Doctours, Martyrs and Confeſſours, that the Church of *England* ever had; who ſpent their times, ſtudies, and lives in oppoſing the Idolatry and Superſtition of the *Romiſh* Church: Set forth at firſt, in the Reign, and by the Authority of King *Edward* the Sixth, who for his Piety, Zeal, Learning and Wiſedom, was accounted the miracle of nature. *Peter Martyr*, in an Oration of his at *Argentine*, ſaith thus of his death;* *Præter omnem ſpem acerbâ & luctuoſâ morte ſublatus eſt Edvardus Angliæ Rex, Monarcharum Chriſtiani orbis candidum Lumen, pietatis Legitimus alumnus, & Evangelii Chriſti propugnator acerrimus.* Beſides all expectation *Edward* King of *England* is taken away by lamentable and cruel Death, who was the clear light of all the Monarchs of the Chriſtian World, the true Son of Piety, and the moſt zealous and earneſt Defender and Maintainer of the Goſpel of Chriſt. And in an Oration of his at *Tigurum*, he gives

* Peter Martyr, *Loc. com. pag.* 741. *Col.* 1.

* Pet. Mart. Loc. com. pag. 745.

gives this Teſtimony of him, † *Obiit proh dolor, obiit Edvardus ille ſanctiſſimus Rex, quo adoleſcente neſcio an Sol doctiorem pro ætate, ſanctiorem atque prudentiorem uſquam viderit.* The moſt Holy King *Eward* is dead, and I know not whether the Sun ever ſaw a more Learned for his age, and a more ſanctified and wiſe Prince. And again in an Epiſtle to Queen *Elizabeth*, ſpeaking of the zeal and care of ſeveral godly and religious Kings in reforming Religion, and eſtabliſhing the true Worſhip of God, ſaith, ‖ *Hoc frater tuus Edvardus Angliæ Rex præclariſſimus, pro viribus, & ſane præ quam ejus ætas pateretur, facere ſtuduit, cujus regnum diutius extrahi, peccata noſtra & ingratitudo intolerabilis non ſiverunt, eximias illius adoleſcentis virtutes, & egregiam pietatem, Deus orbi tantum oſtendere voluit, deinde ut nos, quemadmodum mala noſtra merita exigebant, aliquantulum caſtigaret, illum e terra citius ad ſe revocavit.* The ſame your brother *Edward* the moſt renowned King of *England* did ſtudy, to the utmoſt of his Power, and beyond what his age would permit, to doe: whoſe reign, our ſins and moſt into-

‖ Ib. *p.* 788.

intolerable ingratitude would not suffer to continue longer over us. God onely would shew to the World the singular virtues and most excellent Piety of that young man, and then, to correct us as our evil deservings did require, he soon recalled him from this World to himself. Judicious Mr. *Hooker* calls him * *Edward the Saint, in whom it pleased God, righteous and just, to let* England *see what a blessing, sin and iniquity would not suffer it to enjoy.* This rare and most excellent person God raised up to see this Book composed, to establish it by regal Authority, and then he was taken to his Crown of Glory.

* Hooker. *Eccles. polit. l.* 4. *sect.* 14.

2. "For the matter contained in that "Book † Sober and Learned men have "sufficiently vindicated it, against the "cavils and exceptions of those, who "thought it a part of Piety, to make "what prophane objections they could "against it; especially for Popery and "Superstition. Whereas no doubt the "Liturgy was exactly conformed to "the Doctrine of the Church of *England*, and this, by all reformed Churches is confessed to be most sound and "orthe-

† Basil, *p.* 90.

" orthodox. It casts out all false Doctrine and Worship, and is, of it self, sufficient to confute a *Papist*, and other the Enemies of the *Protestant* Religion. It is fitted for all occasions and uses of the Church, and comprehends the whole Duty of a Christian, both for the *credendis*, contained in the Confessions of Faith; the *faciendis*, in the ten Commandments; and the *petendis*, in the Lord's Prayer, and others framed thereby.

3. For the Confirmation of it; it stands ratified and enjoined by the Laws, Statutes, and Sovereign Authority of five most prudent and pious Persons immediately (Queen *Mary* a Papist onely interposing) succeeding one the other on the *English* Throne: sealed and confirmed by the bloud of so many Martyrs, that suffered in those *Marian* days, shortly after the composure of it, and so written in the bloud of those that compiled it.

4. For the approbation of it; it is commended and allowed by the best Divines of the reformed Churches, both at home and abroad. Such as *Cranmer*, *Tayler*, *Ridley*, *Jewel*, *Calvin*, *Bucer*, and many others. 5. Touchnig

5. Touching God's acceptance and owning of it, the Hiſtory of ages paſt, and the ſtrange providence of God, in relation to the framing, preſerving, bleſſing and reſtoring it, do ſo evidently declare this, that he ſeems to be very much darkned in his mind with prejudice, that can deny or gainſay it. "* Which grace and favour of "Divine aſſiſtence, having not in one "thing or two ſhewed it ſelf, nor for "ſome few days or years appeared, "but in ſuch ſort ſo long continued, "our manifold ſins and tranſgreſſions "ſtriving to the contrary; what can "we leſs thereupon conclude, than that "God would at leaſtwiſe by tract of "time teach the World, that the thing "which he bleſſeth, defendeth, keepeth "ſo ſtrongly, cannot chuſe but be of "him? Wherefore if any refuſe to be"lieve us diſputing for it, let him be"lieve God himſelf thus miraculouſly "working for it.

* Hook. *Eccleſ. Polit. l.* 4. *ſ.* 14.

What I have ſaid in commendation of this book, amounts to no more than what the reverend Divines of the *Presbyterian* perſwaſion, have been conſtrained to ſay of it, even then, when

when they were to make all the exceptions they could againſt it. They ſay, "† We have an high, an honourable eſteem of thoſe Godly and Learned Biſhops, and others, who were "the Compilers of the publick Liturgy; "and do look on it as an excellent and "worthy work. 'Tis true, they add [*for that time* —] But theſe words ſeem to me, no way to abate or detract from the acknowledged *excellency* and *worth* of it. For, if it were an *excellent* and *worthy work* then, what hinders, but that it is ſo now? Wherein doth the *excellency* and *worthineſs* of any form of God's worſhip at any time conſiſt, but in its Conformity to the Scriptures, which is the rule and meaſure of Divine worſhip at all times? It could never be *excellent* and *worthy*, that was at any time unlawfull; and it could have been no otherwiſe, had it been contrary to God's word. And they that ſhall impartially reade the Hiſtory, and ſeriouſly conſider the profound Learning, clear Light, admirable Piety, incomparable Zeal, Purity, Patience, Loyalty, and all other Chriſtian Graces and Virtues, which did ſhine

† *Account of proceedings. p. 1, 2.*

ſhine forth in thoſe renowned Fathers and Martyrs, the Compilers of that book, cannot without bluſhing arrogate to themſelves greater and higher attainments, than they had. Are the men of this age the onely *Children of the light*, and were thoſe Worthies (one of whom || prophetically ſaid to his fellow-ſufferer at the ſtake, *We ſhall this day light ſuch a Candle by God's Grace in* England, *as I truſt, ſhall never be put out*) but in the miſt of Popiſh ignorance and ſuperſtition, in compariſon of us now? Rather, I think, they ought to be acknowledged men extraordinarily filled with the Spirit of God: *Light and underſtanding and ſound wiſedom was found in them, and in nothing did they come behind the very chiefeſt* Servants of God in this generation. We allow and confeſs them to have been men, not onely profound in Learning, but *ſound in the faith*, Orthodox in judgment, yea, the great aſſertours of the *Proteſtant* Religion, and glorious inſtruments in the hands of God, of cauſing that light of truth to break out of darkneſs, by which we now walk, and which we all profeſs. How

|| Mr. Latimer *Act. & Mon.* T. 3. p. 505

is it then, that they who ſpent all their time, ſtudies, and ſtrength in oppoſing the Idolatry and Superſtition of the *Romiſh* Church, and *loved not their lives unto death*, but *were ſlain for the word of God, and teſtimony which they held*, ſhould be thought to retain any thing of Popiſh ſuperſtition in worſhip? What is this, but * *to condemn the generation of God's Children*, which cannot be well pleaſing to their Father?

* Pſ. 73. 15.

But what if it ſhould be proved that the Liturgy of our Church, was (for the ſubſtance of it) in uſe, in the very firſt and pureſt times of the Church of Chriſt, before ever Popiſh Superſtition came into the World? Then, I hope, it will be acknowledged to be free from that, whereof it is ſecretly and moſt ignorantly charged. But Godly and Learned *Cranmer* in Queen *Mary's* days (who knew well what he ſaid, and was well able to make his words good,) offers to enter the liſts with any *Papiſt* living (for it had no other Enemy in thoſe days, neither hath it in theſe, but ſuch as fight with their weapons, and ſharpen their inſtruments againſt it, at their forge.)

And

And (if the Queens Highneſs would grant thereunto) * " prove againſt all " that will ſay the contrary, that all " that is contained in the Holy Com- " munion, ſet out by the moſt innocent " and godly King *Edward* VI. in his " high Court of *Parliament*, is confor- " mable to that order which our Savi- " our Chriſt did both obſerve, and " command to be obſerved, and which " the Apoſtles and primitive Church " uſed many years. And that if he " might be permitted to take to him- " ſelf *Peter Martyr*, and four or five " others, whom he ſhould chuſe, they " would, by God's Grace, take upon " them to defend, not onely the " Common-prayers of the Church, the " miniſtration of the Sacraments, and " other the rites and ceremonies, but " alſo all the Doctrine and Religion ſet " out by the ſaid King *Edward* VI. to " be more pure and according to God's " word, than any other that have been " uſed in *England* theſe thouſand years, " ſo that God's word may be judge. And " that the Order of the Church ſet out " at that preſent in the Realm by Act " of *Parliament*, is the ſame that was

* *Act. & Mon. T. 3. pag. 94.*

" in the Church fifteen hundred years " paſt. Neither faith he it alone, but we have the ſeveral teſtimonies of particular Learned and judicious Saints of that and the following generation, touching the *excellency* and *worth* of that Book; ſuch as *Saunders*, *Taylor*, *Ridley*, *Jewel*, &c. We have a *Noble Army of Martyrs* ſtanding together in vindication of the purity of it. The whole bleſſed company of perſecuted Preachers, in Priſon, at the beginning of Queen *Mary's* Reign, in a petition of theirs to the *King*, *Queen* and *Parliament*, ſay thus " * If your ſaid Sub- " jects be not able by the Teſtimony " of Chriſt, his Prophets, Apoſtles, and " Godly Fathers of his Church, to " prove that the Doctrine of the Church, " Homilies, and *Service-book*, taught and " ſet forth in the time of our late moſt " godly Prince King *Edward* VI. is the " true Doctrine of Chriſt's Catholick " Church, and moſt agreeable with the " Articles of the Chriſtian faith; your " ſaid ſubjects offer themſelves then, " to the moſt heavy puniſhment that " it ſhall pleaſe your Majeſty to ap- " point.

* *Act. & Mon.* T. 3. P. 119.

Should

Should but one *Nonconformiſt* have ſaid ſo much, for the *antiquity* and *purity* of this Book, it would ſooner have been believed by the people of our age, than from the mouths of ſo many learned and holy Fathers. Take therefore the teſtimony of one of that way, and a learned one, Mr. *John Ball*, who having ſpent great pains in quitting it from the objections of *Separatiſts*, lays down this concluſion. * "Our "Service-book is not a Tranſlation of "the *Maſs*, but a reſtitution of the "ancient Liturgy, wherein ſundry "Prayers are inſerted, uſed by the Fa- "thers, agreeable to the Scriptures. And in the ſame Chapter in a few pages after, he hath theſe words. "‖ To "the praiſe of God be it ſpoken, our "Liturgy for purity and ſoundneſs, "may compare with any Liturgy uſed "in the third and fourth Ages of the "Church. Which was long before Popery came into the World.

* *Trial of Grounds tending to Separation, c.* 9. *c.* 155, 156.

‖ *Page* 176.

Neither hath any of the ſeveral *emendations* that it hath admitted, ſince its firſt compoſure, been of that nature or moment as to give an occaſion to charge it in the leaſt with any thing that

is, or was, ſinfull or Superſtitious. However thus much, I ſuppoſe, may unqueſtionably be concluded from the aboveſaid acknowledgment; that if it were an *excellent and worthy work* then, it is not ſinfull now: but the uſe of it being enjoyned by Authority, may be conformed to with a good Conſcience. Eſpecially conſidering, that it is farther acknowledged by the Divines firſt named, "That what things ſoever * are "offenſive to them in it, and deſired "to be removed, are not of the foun-"dation of Religion, nor the eſſentials "of publick Worſhip; and muſt therefore be but circumſtantials. † Which ought to be the more eaſily born with in complyance with Lawfull Authority, by all ſuch as mind their own duty, or tender the peace of the Church; it being a good and ſafe rule which St. *Auguſtine* gives in ſuch a caſe, ‖ *Quod neque contra Fidem, neque contra bonos mores injungitur, indifferenter eſt habendum, & pro eorum inter quos vivitur ſocietate ſeruandum eſt.* Whatſoever is enjoined, that is not contrary to Faith or Holineſs, ought to be obſerved for peace-ſake with them, among whom we live.

* *Account of proceedings. page* 11.

† *Or as Dr.* Owen *in his plea for Nonconformiſts, p.* 9. *ſaith, they differ from us onely in ſignificant fringes and laces of Forms and Ceremonies.*

‖ Aug. *ad* Jan. *Epiſt.* 118.

Yet

Yet how is this Book called to the ſtake, by the upholders and frequenters of Conventicles, and made to fill up, what was behind of the ſufferings of thoſe holy Fathers, that compiled it! How often have I heard it call'd by ſome of them *Popery*, *Idolatry*, *Superſtition*, and what not! How are they accounted the onely *Virtuoſo's* in theſe days, and to have attained to a very high pitch of Piety, when they have onely arrived at ſuch a meaſure of profaneneſs, as to rail at it, and carefully to ſhun their joining with us, in the Worſhip of God by it; and think that they have then done him a very acceptable ſervice, when they have done him none at all, but onely afforded their preſence at the Preaching of a Sermon? And to the end that malice may leave nothing unattempted to render it contemptible, I have obſerved, that theſe ſinfull Aſſemblies are ſtudiouſly continued till the end of Common Prayer in the Church, at leaſt, if not during the Sermon alſo.

Could it ever have been thought, that men who pretend Religion and Conſcience, could have proceeded to

such a monstrous extremity of wickedness, as to prefer their own private humours and fancies, before God's publick Worship? And thus endeavour to undermine and destroy so godly and legal an Establishment? If confession of Sin, profession of Faith, reading of the Scriptures, Prayers and Praise to God (which is the substance of this whole Book) be any part of God's Ordinance or Worship, then surely the practice of these men, is contrary not onely to Gospel order and commands, but even to those Rules of Worship, which the principal men of their own way and perswasion have given. For in the *Directory* composed by the late *Assembly of Divines*, the first direction for publick Worship which they give, is this, * "When the Congregation is "to meet for publick Worship, the "people (having before prepared their "hearts thereunto) ought all to come "and join therein; not absenting themselves from the publick Ordinances "through negligence, or, *upon pretence of Private meetings.*

* *Directory. page* 1.

How are the mouths of *Papists* hereby opened against us, to justifie their own

Recu-

Recuſancy, and to condemn our Church as falſe and adulterate, ſeeing that our own members do revile it (as they of the *Romiſh* Church alſo do, calling it * *an abominable Book, very peſtiferous*, &c. the † ſervice of *Baal*, plain Idolatry) ſeparate themſelves from it, join hands with them to deſtroy it, and are contented to hazard their Eſtates and fortunes, rather than to conform to it? Doth not this harden them in their *Superſtition* and *Idolatry*, avert them from our Church, and make them *ſit down in the ſcorners chair*? Doth not this ſay (in effect) that all thoſe good laws formerly made againſt *Papiſts*, and all penalties and mulcts by virtue thereof inflicted, were moſt unjuſt, in puniſhing them for refuſing to join with us in that form of worſhip, which we our ſelves cannot approve of? We may ſay with the *Athenians*, *Auximus Philippum nos ipſi Athenienſes*, We have ſtrengthned the hands of our Enemies againſt us, by our own diviſions and contentions. It is an odious quality, and that which obſcures the luſtre of all the commendable vertues which ‖ *Franzius* notes of the *Cranes*, that oftentimes

* *Act. & Mon. Tom.* 3. *p.* 19, 138, & 1012.

† *Rhemiſt. annotat. in* 1 Cor. 6. 14. & 1 Cor. 10. 9.

‖ Franzius *Hiſt. Animal. pag.* 321, 322.

tentimes they are so vehemently enraged one with an other, and maintain such a combate among themselves, that they neither observe, nor fear the coming of the *Fowler*; yea, that they rather desire his approach, and to be taken by him, than to be reconciled to their mates, with whom they are faln out. It is a thing much to be feared, that these men will never be at quiet and peace in the Church, untill they make that true of themselves which I have read objected to the aforesaid people of *Athens* by way of reproach, *that they would never vouchsafe to treat or hear of peace, but in mourning gowns, namely, after the loss of their friends and fortunes in the wars.* He hath no mind that considers not this, nor heart that condoles it not.

Put the case, that though the Liturgy of our Church was composed with so much piety and prudence, yet there might remain any thing capable of amendment, as a freckle in a fair Face: what if it be not in all things suitable with every man's judgment or fancy (as there is nothing in the world, the *Directory* it self not excepted, so well done

done, that doth not diſpleaſe ſome: the beſt cook'd diſhes pleaſe not every Palate) yet as St. *Auguſtine* of old anſwered the *Donatiſts* * *Si peccavit Cæcilianus non ideo hæreditatem ſuam perdidit Chriſtus.* Shall God therefore looſe his publick worſhip and ſervice, ſhall it be trampled upon, ſlighted, and prophanely neglected, becauſe we differ about black and white, as *Biſhop Ridley* told *Biſhop Hooper* in a Letter to him?

* Aug. *Epiſt.* 50.

And though in theſe latter days, preaching hath gotten ground of the Prayers of the Church, in the opinion of ſome whom we ſhall ſee preſent now and then at the former, but ſeldom or never at the latter; yet (without any detraction to that excellent ordinance of God be it ſpoken) this moſt deſpiſed part of God's worſhip muſt needs be granted to have the preheminence of the other (eſpecially in theſe days, wherein the Church is ſo maturely compoſed and throughly ſetled in the faith, and the Book of the holy Scriptures ſo complete and common amongſt us in our own Language) by him that conſiders,

1. Firſt, that it is the moſt proper and

and immediate worship of God, and preaching but mediate, as it is the means which God hath ordained to teach men how to pray, and to fit them for that duty. For, † *how can they call upon him in whom they have not believed? And how can they believe in him, of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?*

† Rom. 10. 14.

2. Secondly, it is a duty simply and entirely moral, good in respect of its own nature and quality, before any external constitution passed upon it, and may be resolved into one of the dictates and principles of the Law of Nature, imprinted universally in the hearts of all men at the creation. For before the Law of the ten Commandments ‖ *men began to call on the name of the Lord*; as being taught by the light of Nature, that in God *we all live, move and have our being*; and that he is *the Father of lights, from whom cometh down every good and perfect gift.* But preaching and hearing are acknowledged by all, to be instituted worship, and moral onely by an external imposition and mandate of the Supreme Lawgiver.

‖ Gen. 4. 26.

3. Thirdly, it is a duty of longer du-

ration

ration than preaching: the one being onely for this life; the other, for the life to come also: the one proper and peculiar to men as members of the Church militant, the other common to men and Angels, in the Church triumphant. * „ The knowledge is small „ which we have on Earth, concerning „ things done in Heaven: notwithstanding thus much we know, even of „ Saints in Heaven, that they pray.

* Hook. *Eccles. polit. l.* 5. *Sect.* 23.

4. Fourthly, it is a duty of larger extent and benefit than Preaching is; this onely profiteth those that be present, that do hear it and attend upon it, but Prayer is available even for those that are far distant, yea though they be in the remotest parts of the world. When *Lot*'s preaching did no good at all to his hearers, yet *Abraham*'s prayers might have been so effectual as to have saved five wicked Cities, if there had been but ten righteous persons in them.

What our Blessed Saviour's judgment was in this case, we may easily gather by that place in the Gospel, where he calls the Church οἶκον προσευχῆς, *an house of Prayer*, not of *Preaching*. Whence in the Primitive times all the Christian Temples

Temples were called and known by the name of *Εὐκτήρια, Oratories.*

And publick Prayers of the Church have as much the prehemінence of private, as the duty it ſelf, hath of preaching, in regard there is more force in theſe Prayers, wherein the whole Church joyn † together as one man, than there can be in thoſe, that others, though never ſo many, make apart any where elſe. ‖ *I ſay unto you* (*ſaith* our Saviour) *that if two of you ſhall agree on Earth, touching any thing that they ſhall ask, it ſhall be done for them of my Father which is in Heaven.* Much more then if a Thouſand; and more if the whole Church. They are two excellent and remarkable ſayings of St. *Chryſoſtome* to this purpoſe, which are quoted by * *Biſhop Jewel* in his reply to *Harding's* anſwer. *Non æque exoras cum ſolus dominum obſecras, atque cum fratribus tuis. Eſt enim in hoc plus aliquid, videlicet concordia, conſpiratio, copula amoris, & charitatis, & ſacerdotum clamores. Præſunt enim ob eam rem ſacerdotes, ut populi orationes, quæ infirmiores per ſe ſunt, validiores eas complexæ ſimul in cælum evehantur.* Thou doſt

† *Vis unita fortior*

‖ Mat. 18. 19.

* Pag. 215.

Chryſoſt. *de incomprehenſib. Dei natura.* Hom. 3.

doſt not ſo ſoon obtain thy deſire when thou prayeſt alone unto the Lord, as when thou prayeſt with thy Brethren; for herein is ſomewhat more, the concord, the conſent, the joyning of love and charity, and the cry of the Prieſt. For to that end the Prieſts are made overſeers, that they being the ſtronger ſort, may take with them the weaker Prayers of the People and carry them up into Heaven. Again he ſaith. † *Quod quis apud ſeipſum precatus accipere non poterit, hoc cum multitudine precatus accipiet. Quare? Quia etiamſi non propria virtus, tamen concordia multum poteſt.* The thing that a man cannot obtain by himſelf alone, praying together with the multitude, he ſhall obtain; and why ſo? for although not his own worthineſs, yet concord and unity prevaileth much. When the whole Church joyned together in their devotions for St. *Peter's* enlargment, Omnipotence exerted it ſelf in a ſeries of Miracles || that their Prayers ſhould not be unanſwered. * *Tunc eſt efficacior & ſanatior devotio, quando in operibus pietatis totius eccleſiæ unus eſt animus, & unus eſt ſenſus.* Prayer is then

† Chryſoſt. in 2 *ad Theſ.* Hom. 4.

|| Act. 12. 5. &c.

* Leo *Serm.* 4. *de Jejunio Septimi menſis.*

then more holy and effectual, when in the works of piety there is but one mind and one meaning of the whole Church. Besides, God hath promised (as hath been before shewed) to be more comfortably present in our *Church-Assemblies*, than in any other houses or places whatsoever. If it had been all one to pray in a private house, or in the publick assemblies of the Church, St. *Paul*, and the Godly Christians with him, would never have put themselves to an hazard of their lives, in times of hottest persecution, by meeting together in multitudes, in a place † *where there was an House of Prayer*; or *where they were wont to assemble together to pray.* For it is read both ways. The first pleaseth *Tremelius* best; the latter, *Beza.* ‖ *προσευχὴ enim, & orationem & oratorium significat.* The word signifies both *Prayer*, and an *House of Prayer.*" * The "House of Prayer is a Court beautified "with the presence of celestial powers, "there the Almighty doth sit to hear, "and his Angels intermingle with us, "as our associates, and attend to further our Suits. With reference here-"unto the Apostle requires so great care

† Act. 16. 13.

‖ Cornel. A Lapid.

* Hook. *Eccles. polit. l. 5. Sect.* 25.

to

" to be had of decency in the Church, " for the Angels ſake; ſaith Mr. *Hoo-* " *ker.*

Sixthly, it begets ill thoughts of his Majeſty's moſt gracious Government, as if he were a perſecutor and ſuppreſſor of true Religion, and an enemy to piety and godlineſs. Theſe meetings about in Barnes, and private Houſes, look not as if we lived under a Chriſtian Proteſtant Prince, as if King *Charles* were upon the throne; but as if *Nero*, *Diocleſian*, or *Queen Mary* were alive again, and did rule. * Conventicles (ſaith *Biſhop Lake*) make ſhew as if you " had not freedom of Religion, and " thereby you derogate from the ho- " nour of the King's moſt Chriſtian Go- " vernment, and wrong your Paſtour, " caſting imputation upon him, that " he cannot, or will not inſtruct you " as he ought. And indeed it lays the Axe to the Root, and tends to the undermining and deſtruction of all Government and Governours. Do not the Hiſtories of all Ages give in evidence to the evil tendency of theſe private, ſeditious, and unlawfull meet- VI.

* *Biſhop* Lake *Serm. on* 1 Tim. 2. 11.

ings? In the late years of war and confuſion, thoſe meetings were effectually made uſe of, by all parties, as the great Engine, to pull down the powers then in being. By theſe means *Presbytery* did in a great meaſure prevail to the forceable and irregular throwing down of the legally eſtabliſhed *Epiſcopacy*. So by the ſame means *Independency*, *Anabaptiſm*, *Fifth-monarchiſm* hath been prevalent over and againſt *Presbytery*. So that it is a wonder the Governours of our Church and State have not a more watchfull and jealous Eye, upon all ſuch illegal, Schiſmatical, and ſeditious conventions. It is a ſure rule of our Saviour † *A Kingdom divided cannot ſtand*. It was a principle of *Machiavel*, *divide, & impera*, divide, and take all. Whatſoever may be divided, may be deſtroyed. When a ſociety is broken, it may ſoon be brought to confuſion. 'Tis Satan's way to deſtroy, by diſſolving unions. ‖ *Infirma eſt ſecuritas ab alienis diſſidiis, nec unquam ſtabile eſt regnum, ubi inter ſe diſcordant ii, qui reguntur*. This practice then that tends ſo much to dividing, tends as much to deſtroying both Church and State.

† Mat. 12 25.

‖ *Caſp. Si bel in* Pſ. 133 P. 597.

Seventhly,

Seventhly, Where this liberty is either taken or given, there is, or may be, diſſenting from, yea contrariety of Doctrine to what is taught in publick. And that can no way conduce to edification in faith and holineſs, but to the greateſt confuſion that may be. VII.

The whole Church ſhould be, as the whole World was in *Noah's* time, *unius labii*, of one Language, the building elſe will prove to be but a *Babel*, and the Miniſtry * *for deſtruction, and not for edification*; which is ſo far from being God's Ordinance, that it is quite contrary thereunto. This made St. *Paul* ſo earneſtly to importune the Church of *Corinth*, † *to ſpeak all the ſame things*. And truly ſuch is the condition of the Upholders and Maſters of theſe unlawfull Aſſemblies in theſe days, that there is great danger of their prevarication now and then in Doctrine, and of ſuiting their diſcourſes to their hearers palates. I ſay they are under a very great temptation to gratifie mens vices, by indulging their prejudices. For, as a worthy *Prelate* of our Church hath well obſerved ‖ " Where " Miniſters depend upon voluntary be-

* 2 Cor. 13. ——10.

† 1 Cor. 1. 10.

Biſhop Hall *reſolv. of deciſ.* Pag. 131, 132.

"nevolences, if they do but upon ſome "juſt reproof Gaul the conſcience of a "guilty hearer, or preach ſome truth, "which diſreliſheth the Palate of a pre-"poſſeſſed auditour, he ſtreightway flies "out, and not onely withdraws his own "pay, but the contribution of others "alſo. So as the free Tongue teacher, "muſt either live by air, or be forced "to change his Paſture. Thereupon "it is that thoſe *Sportulary Preachers* are fain to ſooth up their many Maſters, and are ſo gagged "with the fear of ſtarving diſpleaſure, "that they dare not be free in the repre-"henſion of the daring ſins of their un-"certain benefactors, as being charmed to ſpeak either *placentia*, or no-"thing.

This is a truth eaſie to be apprehended. For if even when the Laws enforce men to pay their dues to their Miniſters, they yet continue ſo backward in the diſcharge of them (eſpecially if never ſo little diſpleaſed at juſt reproofs, and lawfull endeavours to reform their vicious lives) how much leſs hope can there be, that being left to their own free choice, they will

prove

prove liberal or bountifull in their voluntary Contributions, if never so little croſs'd upon the like occaſion by their new Maſters.

Laſtly, it opens a door to all Errours and Hereſies, and is the ready way to bring all Religion to nothing. For (ſaith the Apoſtle) when people * *heap up to themſelves teachers, to ſatisfie the itch of their Ears, they will turn away their Ears from the truth, and ſhall be turned to fables in a ſhort time.* Elſewhere the Holy Ghoſt joins *order* and *ſtedfaſtneſs* together. † *Though I be abſent in the fleſh, yet am I preſent with you in the ſpirit, joying to behold your order and ſtedfaſtneſs of your faith in Chriſt. It is impoſſible for men to be ſtedfaſt in Religion, who keep not God's order.* How come ſo many in our days to fall from their ſtedfaſtneſs, ſome to *Anabaptiſm*, ſome to *Quakeriſm*, and ſome to *Atheiſm*, but by breaking firſt that order in Religion, that God hath ſet? If Souldiers in an Army keep their order, every one abiding in his proper place, and to his proper employment and command, they are invincible: but VIII.

* 2 Tim. 4. 3. 4.

† Col. 2. 5.

when once they begin to break their Ranks, they are ſoon after vanquiſhed and deſtroyed.

If liberty may be taken or given to ſuch private Houſe-preaching in another mans Pariſh, why may not a *Jeſuit* that preacheth *Purgatory*, *Invocation* of *Saints*, *Worſhipping* of *Images*, and ſuch like *Popiſh ſtuff* doe the like? May, it is a truth too well known, that there are ſome of them under the notion of *Nonconformiſts* that doe ſo: And in ſundry places of this Nation, ſome ſuch have been diſcovered, and more may, were they carefully ſought after. I am ſure it *ſtrengthens the hands of the wicked*, it juſtifieth and encourageth the *Anabaptiſts*, *Quakers*, and all other *Sectaries*, (who in a Book put forth at the beginning of the long Parliament, called, *The Compaſſionate Samaritan* ‖ deſire that the Parliament would ſtop all proceedings againſt them: and for the future provide, that as well particular and private Congregations, as publick, may have protection from them) in all their unjuſt and prophane ſeparations from our Churches, and ſinfull and unlawfull Conventicles, which

‖ Pag. 75, 76.

which none have been more zealous and forward to condemn and ſuppreſs, than thoſe men that now tread in their ſteps, and doe the ſame thing which they have diſallowed and oppoſed in others.

All which things conſidered, every faithfull Paſtour of a Congregation where ſuch Intruders thruſt themſelves, may ſay to their people, as St. *Paul* to the *Corinthians* * *Though yee have ten thouſand inſtructers, yet ye have not many Fathers, for I have begotten you through the Goſpel.* And, † *If I be not an Apoſtle to others, yet doubtleſs I am to you, for the ſeal of mine Apoſtleſhip are ye in the Lord.* And all ſuch people as content not themſelves with the labours of their pious and painfull Paſtours, but run after Strangers and Uſurpers, may juſtly fear that curſe: ‖ *Thus ſaith the Lord unto the people, Thus have they loved to wander, they have not refrained their feet; therefore the Lord doth not accept them, he will now remember their iniquities, and viſit their ſins.* For, * *as a bird that wandreth from his neſt, ſo is a man that wandreth from his place.* God took

* 1 Cor. 4. 15

† 1 Cor. 9. 2.

‖ Jer. 14. 10.

* Prov. 27. 8.

FINIS.